

State of Arkansas

ANNUAL PROGRESS AND SERVICE REPORT

June 30, 2005

(Revised September 15, 2005)

Submitted to
**Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**
By
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- Attachment 1 CFS-101 and Financial Reports (hard copy)
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Attachment 3 Policy VI-A1 (hard copy)

REPORT ON THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROGRESS FFY 2005

The following report is on accomplishments on the Goals and Objectives. **The 2005 Status Reports are in bold type. September revisions are in blue type.** As data is not available for SFY 2005 until later, we will submit information on progress toward meeting Outcomes when it is available.

Supportive Services

Outcomes

❖ Belief: Every Child Matters

- Specific belief: Child Safety Comes First.

Outcome:

- Children served are safe. No true reports of maltreatment received after supportive services (SS) given.

Reduction in the percent of children who are abused or neglected within one year of receiving supportive services. Current performance is 5%. Target performance is 3% within 5 years.

Source of Information – The Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Annual Report Card

- Children do not enter foster care.

% of children receiving SS services who entered foster care within one year of initiation of services performance is currently at 2%. The % of children entering foster care after receipt of these services will be reduced by 1% within 5 years.

Source of Information – DCFS Annual Report Card

❖ Belief: We have a responsibility to provide services that work.

- Specific Belief: Family Centered services are most effective

. Outcome:

- The plan and services are developed by and include the family.

Child and family involvement in case planning, family involvement will be
70% 1st year 77% 2nd year
84% 3rd year 91.5% 4th year and 95% 5th year.

Source of Information is the Quality Service Peer Review (QSPR) item 18
2nd source - Supervisory Review Tool – Case plan developed with full participation of person(s) served.

Supportive Services Goals and Objectives

Goal 1 - Clearly identify supportive services

Objective 1: Develop services to Families in Need of Services (FINS) as a separate service, differentiated from Supportive Services. Clearly define which families and services are appropriate for supportive services.

- Task 1: Define supportive services. **Completion by 6/30/06**

Status: A supportive services committee was formed and met. The members of the group included two representatives from Community Services (field staff), a representative from CHRIS and three representatives from Community Support. The committee developed the following suggested definition of “supportive services”:

“Supportive Services is a type of service directed towards protecting children and preserving families. This service allows children to remain safely in their homes with services to stabilize the family. The services are community-based and are designed to (1). Increase the strength and stability of families (including adoptive, foster and extended families); (2) Increase parent’s confidence and competence in their parenting abilities; (3) Afford children a stable and supportive family environment, and otherwise to enhance child development. Supportive Services may be obtained through a direct request from a family to keep the family together or to assist in alleviating problems which are likely to result in harm to the child. Typical services include intensive family services, family resource centers, human services workers in the schools, counseling, respite care, early developmental screening of children, mentoring, tutoring, health education for youth, parenting classes, and assistance in accessing other support programs (TEA). These services are generally time limited.”

The definition will be submitted to Executive Staff for review and approval.

- Task 2: Define and develop a system of services for FINS. **Completion by 6/30/06**

Status: The committee discussed FINS and decided to discuss it further at their next meeting. DCFS currently has a FINS pilot program in operation. The committee hopes to review the results and use some of the information to develop a system of services for FINS.

- Task 3: Define DCFS service population of FINS. **Completion by 6/30/06**

Status: The committee will define service population of FINS upon completion of Task 2.

- Task 4: Determine policy based on completion of tasks 1 – 3. **Completion by 6/30/06**

Status: The committee will determine policy upon completion of tasks 1-3.

- Task 5: Implement the changes to policy, procedure and practice. **Completion by 6/30/06**

Status: The committee will implement the changes to policy, procedure and practice upon completion of Task 1-4.

Objective 2 – Educate community and courts on Supportive Services and Services to FINS.

- Task 1: Develop a brochure on the FINS services. **Completion by 6/30/07**

Status

Upon completion of Objective 1, the committee will develop a brochure on the FINS services

- Task 2: Review current brochure on DCFS services. **Completion by 6/30/07**

Status

Committee will review current brochure on DCFS services.

- Task 3: Develop training plan and train staff, providers and key stakeholders on FINS and supportive services. **Completion by 6/30/07**

Status

Committee will develop a training plan. The committee will train staff, providers, and key stakeholders.

- Task 4: Get agreement and buy-in to work with Administrative Offices of the Courts on training judges and juvenile staff regarding FINS and Supportive Services. **Completion by 6/30/07**

Status

The committee will explore an agreement with the Administrative Offices of the Courts on training judges and juvenile staff regarding FINS and Supportive Services.

- **Task 5: Implement tasks 1 – 4. Delete Task**

Objective 3 – Increase documentation of short-term supportive services to include enhancements to CHRIS

- Task 1: Based on definitional changes identify data needed from CHRIS. **Completion by 6/30/07**

Status

The committee will identify data needed from CHRIS based upon definitional changes to Supportive Services.

- Task 2: Identify changes needed in CHRIS. **Completion by 6/30/08**

Status

The committee will identify changes needed in CHRIS for Supportive Services.

- Task 3: Implement changes needed. **Completion by 6/30/08**

Status

The committee will implement changes.

- Task 4: Generate reports from CHRIS on FINS and Supportive Services cases.
Completion by 6/30/08

Status

The committee will have reports generated from CHRIS on FINS and Supportive Services cases.

- Task 5: Monitor the completion of the tasks. **Completion by 6/30/08**

Status

The committee will monitor the completion of tasks.

Goal 2 – Assess the outcome of services

Objective 1 – Families who have maltreatment episodes or whose children enter foster care after receiving supportive services will have those cases reviewed to determine why services did not prevent maltreatment and out-of-home placement. Utilize Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process to address findings.

- Task 1: Conduct a special study on Family Strengths and Needs Assessment and survey families about the impact of services. **Completion by 6/30/08**
- Task 2: Results of study will be a part of the CQI process **Completion by 6/30/09**
- Task 3: Outline recommendations and solutions **Completion by 6/30/09**
- Task 4: Implement changes if needed – report results. **Completion by 6/30/09**

Program Improvement Plan: Strategy 1, Action Step 1.2 In order to protect children and prevent removal, we will revise the risk assessment and family assessment policy, procedures, tools, systems, training and supervisory and monitoring tools and processes to assure that risks are identified and addressed throughout the life of the case.

Goal 3 – Assure that client needs are matched to services

Objective 1 – Provide resource directory for staff (online and ability to print)

- Task 1: Devise services log to record in-house and provider of services.
Completion by 6/30/09

- Task 2: DCFS work on validating and updating eSources website. **Completion by 6/30/09**
- Task 3: Determine if eSources website meets needs of the field staff, make recommendations for changes. **Completion by 6/30/09**

Status

The committee discussed the eSources website. The committee will determine if the website meets the needs of the field staff, and make recommendations for changes. Services log to record in-house and provider of services will be developed.

Objective 2 - Utilizing changes to assessment and case planning made through the Program Improvement Plan, document that clients needs are matched to the services.

- Task 1: PIP implementation of action step 1.2.2 and 1.3.1 is documenting clients needs are met. **Completion by 6/30/09**
- Task 2: QSPR and supervisory review tool results will be reviewed to determine that the needs of families are met. **Completion by 6/30/09**

Program Improvement Plan: Strategy 2: Action Step 2.1 Review and prioritize service needs and contracts to existing budget allocations. Action Step 2.2 Expand current array of services and address service gaps, especially in rural areas, to meet the needs of children and families served by DCFS in order to protect children and prevent removal.

In-Home Support (by Social Service Aides)

Outcomes

❖ *Belief: Every Child Matters*

➤ *Specific belief: Child Safety Comes First.*

Outcome:

- Children served are safe. No true reports of maltreatment received after supportive services (SS) given.

Reduction in the percent of children who are abused or neglected within one year of receiving supportive services. Current performance is 5%. Target performance is 3% within 5 years.

Source of Information – The Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Annual Report Card

- Children do not enter foster care.

% of children receiving SS services who entered foster care within one year of initiation of services performance is currently at 2%. The % of children entering foster care after receipt of these services will be reduced by 1% within 5 years.

Source of Information – DCFS Annual Report Card

❖ **Belief: We have a responsibility to provide services that work.**

➤ **Specific Belief: Family Centered services are most effective**

. Outcome:

- The plan and services are developed by and include the family.

Child and family involvement in case planning, family involvement will be

70% 1st year

77% 2nd year

84% 3rd year

91.5% 4th year and

95% 5th year.

Source of Information is the Quality Service Peer Review (QSPR) item 18

2nd source - Supervisory Review Tool – Case plan developed with full participation of person(s) served.

In-Home Support Goals and Objectives

Goal 1 - The Division will develop a clear, consistent job description for the Social Service Aides (SSA's) and provide training and certification for improved skills to work with families.

Objective 1: Explore development of a career ladder for SSA's.

- Task 1: Develop proposal of a career ladder for SSA's. **Completion by 6/30/06**
- Task 2: Identify job specifications for the each recommended level of SSA's. **Completion by 6/30/06**
- Task 3: Submit changes to DCFS Executive staff and if necessary to DHS then OPM for changes. **Completion by 6/30/06**

Completion of tasks by September 30, 2006

Responsibility of completion: Financial and Administrative Support and Community Services.

Objective 2: Establish a training and certification program for SSA's, which includes substance abuse training and include a plan for continuing education.

- Task 1: Identify areas of training needed for SSA's based on the career ladder. **Completion by 6/30/06**
- Task 2: Develop listing of competencies for SSAs. **Completion by 6/30/06**
- Task 2: Develop a training and certification program based on competencies for SSAs. **Completion by 6/30/06**
- Task 3: Implement and monitor tasks above. **Completion by 6/30/06**

Status

The agency has certified designated SSA's to teach Active Parenting Education to families in group settings or one-on-one in the family's home. Training has been provided to Aides on Anger Management. However, the agency is still working toward the implementation of this service being provided by staff. Several Aides were a part of the assessment and case-planning training that was held in April and May of this year. Aides are encouraged to take advantage of training opportunities planned by Staff Development and Mid-South Training Academy.

Completion of tasks by September 30, 2006

Responsibility for completion: Community Services and Legislative Analysis, Planning and Research

Objective 3: Explore with university partners options for SSA's to receive support to work on a Bachelor's level Social Work degree.

- Task 1: Develop program and policy for providing educational (BSW w/IV-E tuition currently UAF will provide) services for SSA's. **Completion by 6/30/07**

- Task 2: Implement an educational program for SSA's. **Completion by 6/30/07**
- Task 3: Monitor and report the numbers of staff completing the program.
Completion by 6/30/07

Status

The agency has developed an appropriate educational plan for SSA's and policy that will govern the educational plan. The plan has been submitted to Executive Staff for final approval.

Completion of tasks by September 30, 2007

Responsibility for completion: Legislative Analysis, Research and Planning,
Community Services

Goal 2 - Produce better timely, individualized services to clients and customers.

Objective 1 – Develop a screen in CHRIS for SSA's to document casework activity for monitoring purposes.

- Task 1: Ensure that there is a process in CHRIS for workers to document the referral of a case to an SSA staff person. **Completion by 6/30/07**
- Task 2: Referrals must be approved by the supervisor and incorporated into the case plan. **Completion by 6/30/07**
- Task 3: Review and update referral and CFS 322 Homemaker Referral form.
Completion by 6/30/07

Completion of tasks by September 30, 2007

Responsibility for completion: Community Services and Legislative Analysis,
Research and Planning

Protective Services

Outcomes

❖ Belief: Every Child Matters

- Specific belief: Child Safety Comes First.

Outcome:

- Child is safe, no repeat true reports – during and 6 months after services provided and case closed.

Source of Information: National Standard - A State meets the national standard for this indicator if, of all children who were victims of a report of child maltreatment determined true during the first six months of the period under review, 6.1% or fewer children had another report determined within six months.

QSPR – item 2 – Repeat Child Maltreatment – 95% by year five to substantially achieve this target.

Outcome:

- Six month after case closed, no removal required; safety and risk assessment indicates child is safe. [Develop and design an automated report of child maltreatment reports determined true 6 months after case closures.]

Source of Information – DCFS Annual Report Card

- Specific belief: Children deserve to thrive, not just survive.

Outcome:

Physical, medical and emotional health needs are met (immunizations up to date, medication management is maintained, checkups, weight/eye and dental, grooming etc).

Physical Health of Child target will be substantially achieved by:

1st year 90%,
2nd year 92%,
3rd year 93%,
4th year 94% and
5th year 95%

Source of Information: QSPR – Item 22

Mental Health of Child target will be substantially achieved by:

1st year 80%,
2nd year 83%,
3rd year 85%
4th year 90% and
5th year 95%

Source of Information: QSPR – Item 23

❖ Belief: People Need Family

Outcome: The plan and services are developed by and include the family

Child and family involvement in case planning, family involvement will be

70% 1st year
77% 2nd year
84% 3rd year
91.5% 4th year and
95% 5th year.

Source of Information is the Quality Service Peer Review (QSPR) item 18
2nd source - Supervisory Review Tool – Case plan developed with full
participation of person(s) served.

Protective Services Goals and Objectives

Goal 1 - Maintain family unit safely

Objective 1: On-going assessment of risk is completed throughout the life of the case

- Task 1: Completion of Action Step 1.2 in the PIP - In order to protect children and prevent removal, we will revise the risk assessment and family assessment policy, procedures, tools, systems, training and supervisory and monitoring tools and processes to assure that risks are identified and addressed throughout the life of the case. **Completion by 6/30/06**
- Task 2: Evaluation of the new risk assessment process will be conducted 1 year after implementation. **Completion by 6/30/06**
- Task 3: Implement recommendations based on the evaluation. **Completion by 6/30/06**

Status

The agency has provided training to selected child welfare staff on assessment and case-planning in April, May and June of this year. Twenty-six counties have been trained. Additional training is scheduled for June 28, 2005. The plan is to offer this training in the future.

Completion of tasks by September 30, 2006

Responsibility for completion: PIP Strategy Group 1, Legislative Analysis, Research and Planning, Community Support and Community Services

Objective 2: Family needs and strengths assessed and identified.

- Task 1: Completion of Action Step 1.2 in the PIP - In order to protect children and prevent removal, we will revise the risk assessment and family assessment policy, procedures, tools, systems, training and supervisory and monitoring tools and processes to assure that risks are identified and addressed throughout the life of the case. **Completion by 6/30/06**
- Task 2: Utilizing the results of the QSPR, evaluate the Family Strengths and Needs Assessment and family involvement in the process. **Completion by 6/30/06**
- Task 3: Implement recommendations based on the evaluation. **Completion by 6/30/06**

Status

The agency has been conducting Quality Services Peer Reviews in all 10 areas. Corrective Action Plans have been developed to address any areas that are below the required percentages. Area Managers are providing quarterly feedback in regards to the process of the corrective action plans.

Completion of tasks by September 30, 2006

Responsibility for completion: Strategy 1, Legislative Analysis, Research and Planning, Community Services and Community Support.

Objective 3: Parents and children are involved in the development of the case plan.

- Task 1: Completion of Action Step 1.3 of the PIP - Revise the case planning process, policies, procedures, tools, systems, training and supervisory and monitoring tools to assure appropriate providers and family members are involved, including non-custodial parents where appropriate, and that case plans are developed to keep children safe and prevent removal. **Completion by 6/30/06**
- Task 2: Utilizing the results of the QSPR, evaluate the Family Strengths and Needs Assessment. **Completion by 6/30/06**
- Task 3: Implement recommendations based on the findings from the evaluation. **Completion by 6/30/06**

Program Improvement Plan: Strategy 1, Action Step 1.2 In order to protect children and prevent removal, we will revise the risk assessment and family assessment policy, procedures, tools, systems, training and supervisory and monitoring tools and processes to assure that risks are identified and addressed throughout the life of the case. Action Step 1.3 Revise the case planning process, policies, procedures, tools, systems, training and supervisory and monitoring tools to assure appropriate providers and family members are involved, including non-custodial parents where appropriate, and that case plans are developed to keep children safe and prevent removal

Status

The agency has provided training to supervisors who monitor staffs' continual assessment of families. Supervisors are required to utilize the newly developed Supervisory Review Tool to assist their workers in providing services. Supervisors are able to address the overall progress of the families and offer input to staff. Supervisors are monitoring workers interaction with families during the development of the case plan. This activity will ensure families have input in the development of the case plan and that the physical, medical, emotional, educational and social needs are met for the children being served.

Completion of tasks by September 30, 2006

Responsibility for completion: Strategy 1, Community Services and Legislative Analysis, Research and Planning

Goal 2 - Determine effectiveness of services

Objective 1: Case plan is framed to meet the needs of the specific child and family members (including the physical, medical and emotional needs)

- Task 1: Completion of Action Step 1.3 of the PIP - Revise the case planning process, policies, procedures, tools, systems, training and supervisory and monitoring tools to assure appropriate providers and family members are

- involved, including non-custodial parents where appropriate, and that case plans are developed to keep children safe and prevent removal. **Completion by 6/30/06**
- Task 2: Utilizing the results of the QSPR, evaluate the Family Strengths and Needs Assessment. **Completion by 6/30/06**
 - Task 3: Implement recommendations based on the findings from the evaluation. **Completion by 6/30/06**

Status

The agency has provided training to selected child welfare staff on assessment and case-planning in April, May and June of this year. Twenty-six counties have been trained. Additional training is scheduled for June 28, 2005. The plan is to offer this training in the future.

Completion of task by September 30, 2006

Responsibility for completion: Strategy 1, Community Services, Community Support, Legislative Analysis, Research and Planning

Foster Care

Outcomes

Belief: Every child matters.

- . Outcome: The plan and services are developed by and include the family.
- ❖ . Outcome: Preventing abuse and neglect in out of home placements.

Source of Information: National Standard - A State meets the national standard for this indicator if, of all children in foster care in the State during the period under review, the percentage of children who were the subject of report of child maltreatment determined to be true by a foster parent or facility staff is 0.57% or less.

- Specific belief: Children deserve to thrive not just survive
- Outcome: Children in care move less

Source of Information: National Standard - A State meets the national standard for this indicator if, of all children who have been in foster care less than twelve months from the time of the latest removal, 86.7% or more children had no more than two placement settings.

- Outcome: Children in care access primary health care and or mental health services

Source of Information: QSPR Item 22 Physical Health of child and Item 23 Mental Health of Child

- Outcome: Children in care have improved educational performance

Educational Services will be substantially achieved by

1st year 85%,
2nd year 88%,
3rd year 91%,
4th year 93% and
5th year 95%

Source of Information: QSPR Item 21

- Specific belief: Children deserve a forever family

Outcome: Children are successfully reunited with their family

Source of Information: National Standard: - A State meets the national standard for this indicator if, of all children who were reunified with their parents or caretakers at the time of discharge from foster care, 76.2% or more children were reunified in less than twelve months from the time of the latest removal from home.

Outcome: Siblings are placed together, unless it is clinically inappropriate to do so.

Placement with siblings will be substantially achieved by

1st year 85%,
2nd year 87%,
3rd year 90%,
4th year 92.5% and
5th year 95%

Source of Information – QSPR Item 12

❖ Belief: Strong Communities Build Strong Families

➤ Specific Belief: People belong in healthy community

- Outcome: Children are placed in the least restrictive placement, in close proximity to their familiar environment.

Proximity of placement of child will be substantially achieved by

1st year 81%,
2nd year 85%,
3rd year 90%,
4th year 92% and
5th year 95%

Source of Information: QSPR Item 11

❖ Belief: Our Job is To Empower people To Help Themselves

➤ Specific Belief: Our services should promote self-worth, dignity and respect.

Outcome: Parents and age appropriate child are involved in the development of the case plan.

Child and family involvement in case planning, family involvement will be substantially achieved by

70% 1st year
77% 2nd year
84% 3rd year
91.5% 4th year and
95% 5th year.

Source of Information: QSPR Item 18

2nd source will be the Supervisory Review Tool – Case plan developed with full participation of person(s) served.

Foster Care Goals and Objectives

Goal 1 - Recruit, train and retain foster families in sufficient numbers to meet the needs.

Objective 1 - Implement statewide coordinated recruitment plan

- Task 1 – PIP tasks for action step 3.1 increases by 10% the number of foster parents recruited who are willing to accept children that enter foster care and meet their special needs. **Completion by 9/30/06**

Status

A statewide media campaign was initiated in order to raise the level of awareness of the need for more foster homes and to promote the Divisions' recruitment efforts.

- Task 2: Evaluate the effectiveness of the statewide recruitment plan.
Completion by 9/30/07

Status

The agency created a foster parent recruitment committee comprised of staff from the Community Service Section, Community Support Section, and Planning to study the effectiveness of the statewide recruitment plan. The committee will also prepare an annual report that demonstrates media campaign activities and recruitment efforts statewide.

- Task 3: Analyze the Foster Family Needs Assessment grid results with CHRIS approval of foster homes. **Completion by 9/30/06**

Status

The Family Foster Home Needs Assessment tool was re-designed to better assist with specific county recruitment efforts by identifying specific types of foster home resources that are needed. The foster parent recruitment committee will analyze the results from the assessment and the number of approved foster homes that are listed in CHRIS.

- Task 4: Evaluate the Areas' recruitment plans and retention of foster homes.
Completion by 9/30/07

Status

The foster parent recruitment committee will evaluate the Areas plan quarterly to ensure that they are effective and if necessary, make recommendations to the appropriate Community Service, Program Administrator for changes in the plan. The committee will also prepare an annual report that demonstrates media campaign activities and recruitment efforts statewide.

Completion of tasks by September 30, **2007**

Responsibility for completion: PIP Strategy Group 3, Community Support and Community Services

Objective 2 - Provide pre-service and in-service training for foster parents in a timely and flexible manner.

- Task 1: Continue to conduct the quarterly meetings, regional meetings and PDT meetings regarding homes. **Completion by 9/30/06**
- Task 2: Provide status reports on the results of the meetings. **Completion by 9/30/06**
- Task 3: If issues are discussed and recommendations are needed, develop and implement as necessary. **Completion by 9/30/06**

Status

DCFS continues to have quarterly meetings that involve Midsouth, LARP staff, Community Support staff and Community Service staff. The meetings are set up to identify issues and problems with pre-service and in-service trainings for foster parents. Midsouth prepares a minutes of meetings held. Based on recommendations, both Midsouth and DCFS has developed and implemented new policy and/or procedures as necessary.

Completion of tasks on going - annual

Responsibility for completion: Legislative Analysis, Research and Planning

Objective 3 – Formal Kinship Care Program will be developed

- Task 1: Identify options for developing a Kinship care program and include informal and the out of home placements RT children. **Completion by 9/30/06**
- Task 2: Develop recommendations for subsidizing guardianships. **Completion by 9/30/08**
- Task 3: Develop recommendations for a Kinship care program in DCFS for executive staff approval. **Completion by 9/30/07**
- Task 4: Implement the recommendations approved by executive staff. **Completion by 9/30/08**

Status

DCFS developed a policy to preserve family connections, a child in foster care may now be placed in a Provisional Relative Foster Home. The policy allows a relative home to be opened by DCFS (for no more than six months) after the division conducts health and safety checks on the relative and the relative's home. Until the relative's home is open as a regular foster home they can apply for and receive public assistance however, no board payments will be made. If the relative's home is not opened after six months of placement the child will be removed from the home or the courts may grant the relative custody of the child.

Completion of tasks by September 30, **2008**

Responsibility for completion: Community Support and Legislative Analysis, Research and Planning

Objective 4 – Ensure adequate placement options for children in other placements

- Task 1 Identify demographics about children placed in other settings. **Completion by 9/30/06**
- Task 2: Identify the kinds of services that are effective. **Completion by 9/30/07**
- Task 3: Identify other placement options currently not available in Arkansas i.e. receiver homes, assessment facilities and develop recommendations for consideration. **Completion by 9/30/08**

Program Improvement Plan: Strategy 3, Action Step 3.1 In order to reduce foster care re-entry, increase by 10% the number of foster parents recruited who are willing to accept children that enter foster care and meet their special needs. Action Step 3.3 To increase stability of foster care placements, expand current supports (helpline and support groups) and specialized training for foster parents. Action step 3.4 To have sufficient foster homes to meet the needs of children entering care, we need to not only recruit appropriate homes, we also need to retain those homes that we have. In order to be able to identify and address foster parent retention issues, we will develop an exit interview process for foster parents. Action Step 3.6 Ensure relatives are appropriately explored as placement options.

Status

The agency will develop a foster care committee comprised of staff from Community Service Section, Community Support Section and external stakeholders to study adequate placement options for children in other placements.

Completion of tasks by September 30, **2008**

Responsibility for completion: Strategy 3, Community Services, Community Support, Legislative Analysis, Research and Planning and Financial and Administrative Support

Goal 2 - Ensure health and safety of child is maintained while in foster care.

Objective 1 - Children's needs including basic placement needs are assessed upon entry into foster care

- Task 1 – Completion of Action Step 1.2 in the PIP - Revise the risk assessment and family assessment policy, procedures, tools, systems, training and supervisory and monitoring tools and processes to assure that risks are identified and addressed throughout the life of the case. **Completion by 9/30/07**
- Task 2 – Implement risk assessment and family assessment process according to the PIP workplan. **Completion by 9/30/07**

- Task 3 – Completion Action Step 2.6. of the PIP - Increase the percentage of children in foster care who receive initial, comprehensive and ongoing mental health services that are documented in CHRIS and hard copy files. **Completion by 9/30/06**
- Task 4 – Utilize results of QSPR reports to monitor task 2. **Completion by 9/30/07**

Status

The agency will develop a foster care committee comprised of staff from Community Service Section, Community Support Section and external stakeholders to study the objectives and tasks under Goal 2.

Completion of tasks by September 30, **2008**

Responsibility for completion: PIP Strategy Group 2, Community Services, Community Support,

Objective 2 - Children are placed in the least restrictive most family like setting – (close proximity to siblings)

- Task 1: Establish baseline of children placed in their home county. **Completion by 9/30/06**
- Task 2: Establish baseline of children placed together with their siblings. **Completion by 9/30/06**
- Task 3: Address steps to get siblings placed together when they are not initially placed together. **Completion by 9/30/07**

Completion by 6/30/08

Responsibility for completion: Legislative Analysis, Research and Planning, Community Services, Community Support, Financial and Administrative Support

Objective 3 – Children are placed with siblings, unless it is inappropriate to do so.

- Task 1: Completion of Action Step 3.1 of the PIP. Monitor foster care recruitment plan. **Completion by 9/30/07**

Completion of tasks by September 30, **2007**

Responsibility for completion: PIP Strategy Group 3, Community Services, Community Support,

Program Improvement Plan: Action Step 2.5 Increase the percentage of children whose physical health care needs is addressed in service planning. Action Step 2.6 Increase the percentage of children in foster care who receive initial, comprehensive and ongoing mental health services that are documented in CHRIS and hard copy files.

Goal 3 - Ensure DCFS capacity to provide services focused on reunification or other permanency goals in a timely manner.

Objective 1 – Develop sufficient services to support families

- Task 1: Completion of Action Step 1.2 in the PIP - Revise the risk assessment and family assessment policy, procedures, tools, systems, training and supervisory and monitoring tools and processes to assure that risks are identified and addressed throughout the life of the case. **Completion by 9/30/07**
- Task 2: Completion of Action Step 2.2 in the PIP - Expand the current array of services and address service gaps, especially in rural areas, to meet the needs of children and families served by DCFS in order to protect children and prevent removal. **Completion by 9/30/07**

Completion of tasks by September 30, 2007

Responsibility for completion: PIP Strategy Group 1, PIP Strategy Group 2
Community Services, Community Support, Financial and Administrative Support,
Legislative Analysis, Research and Planning

Objective 2 – Provide opportunities for foster families to be involved with biological families.

- Task 1: Ensure foster parent and biological parent are involved in planning for services and developing the case plan. **Completion by 9/30/07**
- Task 2: Explore feasibility of visits taking place in the foster home. **Completion by 9/30/07**
- Task 3: Train staff to inform both the biological parent and foster parent of the importance of visits between child and parent. **Completion by 9/30/07**

Completion of tasks by September 30, 2007

Responsibility for completion: Community Services, Community Support,
Legislative Analysis, Research and Planning

Objective 3 – Provide permanency within 12 months.

- Task 1: Completion of Action Step 3.5 in the PIP - Implement and monitor the statewide adoption recruitment plan in order to increase homes for African American children waiting for an adoptive home and for other waiting children. **Completion by 9/30/06**

Program Improvement Plan: PIP Strategy Group 2: Action Step 2.1 Review and prioritize service needs and contracts to existing budget allocations. Action Step 2.2 Expand the current array of services and address service gaps, especially in rural areas, to meet the needs of children and families served by DCFS in order to protect children and prevent removal.

Status

The agency will develop a foster care committee comprised of staff from Community Service Section, Community Support Section and external stakeholders to study the objectives and tasks under Goal 3.

Completion of tasks by September 30, 2006

Responsibility for completion: PIP Strategy Group 3, Community Support, and Community Services

Adoption Services

Outcomes

Belief: Every child matters.

Specific belief: Children deserve a forever family

- Outcome: Children that cannot be reunified with their families are successfully placed in adoptive families.

Source of Information: National Standard - A State meets the national standard for this indicator if, of all children who exited foster care during the year under review to a finalized adoption, 32% or more children exited care in less than 24 months from the time of the latest removal from home.

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1– Increase the number of approved adoptive families.

Objective 1- Recruit and retain the number of families willing to adopt children nine years of age and older by 10%

- Tasks are identified in the Adoption Recruitment Plan. **Completion dates noted in Plan.**
- Task 2: Implement Adoption Recruitment Response Team (RRT) **Completed and ongoing.**
- Task 3: Evaluate the effectiveness of the Response Team. **Completion by 9/30/06**

Completion of tasks by September 30, 2006 – annually thereafter

Responsibility for completion: Community Support, and Community Services

Status

An adoption recruitment response team (RRT) has been established within the Adoption Services Unit. The RRT consists of the Adoption Program Coordinator plus two individuals, provided through purchase of service. Funding has been from AdoptUSKids and Adoption Incentive grants. The role of the RRT is to respond to incoming inquiries from families in a timely (within 48 hours), respectful, enthusiastic way and to keep them engaged in the process until they are hooked up with a DCFS adoption specialist or another adoption agency. The RRT provides information, encouragement and support. The RRT takes note of systemic barriers and works with the Adoption Unit Manager and others on ways of eliminating such barriers. Arkansas' RRT is in support of The National Recruitment Campaign, which is an effort mandated by Congress. It is a joint effort of the Children's Bureau, AdoptUSKids and other organizations.

During state fiscal year 2005, AdoptUSKids referred ninety-five families to the RRT. Adoption.com referred 253 families. 995 families have inquired about adoption through DCFS' own web-based foster care and adoption inquiry system. The RRT responded to many of these families. Feedback from families and staff on the work of the team has been favorable. Contacts have been initiated to arrange for a formal evaluation of the effectiveness of the RRT. A request has been submitted to the Quality Assurance Unit, Hornsby Zeller and Associates, to provide the evaluation.

An aggressive statewide adoption recruitment plan has been developed for the period FFY 2005—2009. Tasks have been assigned to central office and adoption field staff for leadership in implementation of the plan. Activities are divided into three categories, including general recruitment, targeted recruitment and child specific recruitment. Accomplishment dates fall between September 30, 2005 and September 30, 2009.

A Spanish language campaign was launched in May 2005. TV and radio spots are running nation wide. DCFS is prepared to respond to Spanish speaking inquiries by using interpreters that are available through purchase of service. DCFS in the process of getting foster care and adoption brochures translated to Spanish.

Objective 2 – Recruit and retain the number of families willing to adopt African American children by 10%.

- Tasks are identified in the Adoption Recruitment Plan. **Completion dates noted in Plan.**
- Task 2: Implementation of the Foster/Adoption Inquiry Process **Completed 2005**
- Task 3: Track and determine outcome of inquiries **Completed 2005 and ongoing**
- Task 4: Develop a report that compares inquiries with approved homes (CHRIS) **Completion by 9/30/06**
- Task 5: Identify effectiveness of the inquiry process and develop correction action plan if necessary. **Completion by 9/30/06**

Program Improvement Plan: Strategy 3, Action Step 3.5, Implement and monitor the statewide adoption recruitment plan in order to increase homes for African American children waiting for an adoptive home and for other waiting children

Completion of tasks by September 30, 2006 – annually thereafter

Responsibility for completion: Community Support, Community Services

Status

DCFS established a web-based foster care and adoption inquiry system in August 2004. It provides numerous reports, which allows for tracking and monitoring of all individuals who submit their inquiries into the system. If an adoption specialist does

not contact inquirers within three working days, an overdue list is generated. The RRT monitors this list. They contact all families who show up on the list. This provides a timely response from DCFS.

A Foster/Adoption Inquiry Process has been developed and implemented. Various report in CHRIS are available to monitor. Since the reports are new, some revisions may be necessary to assure all needed data is being collected. Data collection was initiated in April 2005.

Goal 2 – Reduce the length of time from TPR to finalization of adoption:

Objective 1 – Reduce the length of time from TPR to preadoptive placement by 10%

- **Task 1: Identify time for TPR to placement into pre-adoptive home report from CHRIS and develop a baseline [Completion by 9/30/05](#)**
- **Task 2: Reduce by 2% a year. [Completion by 9/30/06](#)**
- **Task 3: Expand opportunities by implementation of the following: Adoption Recruitment Plan, Adoption Opportunities Grant, FC Recruitment Plan, AdoptUSKids – Recruitment Response, and Adoption.com. [Completion by 9/30/06](#)**

Completion of tasks – ongoing, annual results of report produced from these efforts currently in place.

Responsibility for completion: Strategy 3, Community Support and Legislative Analysis, Research and Planning

Status

An aggressive statewide adoption recruitment plan has been developed for the period FFY 2005—2009. Tasks have been assigned to central office and adoption field staff for leadership in implementation of the plan. Activities are divided into three categories, including general recruitment, targeted recruitment and child specific recruitment. Accomplishment dates fall between September 30, 2005 and September 30, 2009.

In an effort to remove jurisdictional barriers to adoption, DCFS routinely registers waiting children with AdoptUSKids and Adoption.com. During SFY 2005, AdoptUSKids referred ninety-five families for children in DCFS care. Adoption.com referred 253 families.

A request has been submitted to CHRIS to request a report on Termination of Parental Rights in order to establish baseline data for the last three state fiscal years.

Adoption Opportunities Grant - Major Activities/Accomplishments

During the 1st half of the year, Coalition activity in the field during this reporting period has been in Service Area IX. Coalition meetings have been held, structure and roles for the coalition have been discussed and dialogue has occurred regarding forming additional coalitions with the Northeast Adoption Service Area. This program involves community members and representatives from all walks of life, especially faith-based individuals and groups, who share the common goal of finding adoptive families for waiting children. They have sponsored several recruitment efforts. This Adoption Coalition is presently composed of over 35 members. The Adoption Supervisors and the newly hired project director have provided assistance for DHS/DCFS Areas II and IV to develop Adoption Coalitions. The Adoption Coalition members in Area II are working on a major organizational and recruitment activity for late summer or early fall. Work is underway to add video clips of waiting children onto the DHS/DCFS web site.

In regard to updating and inserting video clips of children awaiting placements, adequate equipment has been ordered and training is being planned. Also, efforts are underway to improve the electronic matching system for the state to allow for more complete and timely access. Much of the finalization of work needed for this system will occur during this next fiscal year.

There has been a data collection system developed by the evaluators of the Project (Hornsby & Zeller) to provide coalitions with a means of resource information about coalition members and for logging of activities. Hornby Zeller Associates, Inc. has and will continue to generate the quarterly statistical report, which will be used to monitor this program.

Foundation building has begun in the various adoption areas across the state plus working with DCFS Administration on finding the resources to “reopen” the purchase of service contracts to allow for adoptive home studies and adoptive summaries to be conducted by private providers thus lessening the stress on the already burdened field staff. With this happening, Coalition building could again begin in full earnest at the local level. All coalitions have submitted an annual plan to discuss goals for the upcoming year, events to be coordinated and budgets for what is needed to keep the coalition running.

❖ Northwest Area

Due to extreme shortage of adoption field staff, very limited activities have occurred. Assistance has been given to locating POS resource persons to assist with responding to adoption inquiries. Dialogue has begun with a former adoption specialist in that area to restart adoptive/foster parent support group meetings. Met with a foster parent who is interested in forming a “foundation” to see if there are some active community staff that would like to also jump start the development of a coalition.

❖ **Northeast Area**

Much Coalition and Adoption Support Group activities has been initiated or supported during the quarter.

○ **West Memphis**

Coalition has been structured and reinforced. Group is leading the state in moving forward with both recruitment and retention efforts. Coalition distributed both adoptive and foster home materials to area churches plus newspaper articles were written regarding the Adoption Coalition and another one on the Adoptive Parent Support Group meeting. Ongoing support has been given to adoptive parent meetings plus Christmas skate party for adoptive families.

○ **Searcy Area**

Coalition development work has begun and meetings with potential coalition leaders have occurred. A meeting was conducted with foster and prospective adoptive families from their support group to explore their participation and development of a coalition.

○ **Mt. Home Area**

After meeting with adoption specialist and area resource individual a list of potential Coalition persons was pulled together. Three (3) Coalition meetings have occurred, and the group fully endorsed the Adoption/Foster Coalition concept.

○ **Jonesboro Area**

This coalition is up and running and meets monthly. Contact has also made with leaders of adoptive support group to offer assistance and support.

❖ **Southeast Area**

Coalition development work has begun and meeting with all Adoption Specialists has occurred. Work has been through the Acting Adoption Supervisor and decision made to begin Coalition work in Forrest City area.

Forrest City Area

Assistance has been given to restarting the Parent Support meeting by sending out announcement and providing refreshments for adoptive family Christmas gathering. There has been process of gathering names and addresses for potential coalition members.

Southwest Area

Efforts have been underway in getting coalition started plus adoptive parent support meetings.

○ **Texarkana**

This coalition is up and running and meets monthly.

- **Hot Springs**

This coalition is up and running and meets monthly. The Juvenile Judge has endorsed the coalition concept and is helping with names of potential coalition members.

- ❖ **Central Area**

This coalition is up and running and meets monthly. The Pulaski County area has begun looking at ways to develop more support for both adoptive and foster parents in the area. The group will continue to explore possibilities of having adoptive/foster parent support meetings.

- ❖ **Adoptive Parent Support**

Continue quarterly meetings with private adoption agencies to further working relationship. Continue being an active participant in the Arkansas Adoption Association (AAA) plus stay involved with another organization called the Arkansas Adoption Coalition that is working on an Adoption Conference. Identify other adoption support needs and efforts.

- ❖ **Adoption Website Development**

Digital cameras with video capacity have been delivered to Adoption Specialists plus each specialist received training. The initial work needed will be to update the current website consisting of children available for adoption. Work has not begun on creating a website listing approved adoptive families waiting for children.

- ❖ **Electronic Matching**

Work has begun and the first meeting held to review parent/child matching system and converting to the DCFS state system CHRIS. Preliminary work has been done and runs completed. Additional meetings and feedback will be scheduled to get this system working so that matches from the field can occur in more timely and efficient manner.

- ❖ **Faith Based Conference Follow-up**

A follow-up meeting was held for attendees of the Shreveport, LA Faith Based Conference, held in September 2004. Joining the follow-up session were key personnel from DCFS. There was a consensus that we needed to bring one of the keynote speakers of the Shreveport conference to Arkansas to assist in getting the faith-based community more involved with adoptions. Reverend Martin was the group's recommendation, and it was further noted that we ought to "take him to the community" instead of just one large meeting in Little Rock.

The working groups identified key places and groups to meet, scheduled rooms and food, scheduled radio segments to announce this effort, set up workshop and conference like settings that would not only include the faith-based groups but include community and department staff involvement and participation.

The purpose of this visit was to promote the awareness of adoption, build adoption resources and assist in finding permanent families for currently waiting children. Workshops, breakfasts and luncheons were held around the state and featured the dynamic and inspiration speaker, Reverend W. C. Martin of Shelbyville, Texas. Rev. Martin is the cofounder of “Saving A Generation Ministry”, the Bennett Chapel Family Outreach Center. Reverend Martin and his wife along with their congregation have adopted approximately eighty (80) children who were abused or neglected. He has been instrumental in providing consultation and training to state and community organizations. The weeklong visit began in West Memphis with the 1st Coalition in DCFS Area IX and their membership meeting at the DHS County Office, meetings conducted with city officials, local churches, civic centers, ministerial alliances, radio spots. This effort began March 21, 2005 through March 25, 2005 with participation by the five (5) fully functional Coalitions, local churches, DCFS staff and civic organizations.

Planned Activities for the Next Twelve Months

- **Maintain the Adoption Coalitions in DHS/DCFS Areas IX, II and IV.**
- **Build new Adoption Coalitions in DHS/DCFS Areas VI and VII.**
- **Assist each Adoption Coalition with the development of an annual plan to outline their individual mission, activities and tasks and prepare a budget of how they plan to spend their stipend.**
- **Continue the development of the electronic directory of prospective adoptive families on the DHS/DCFS web site.**
- **Continue the development of the video profiles of available children on the DHS/DCFS web site.**
- **Continue the development of the resource packets for public awareness, targeted, and child specific recruitment.**
- **Initiate work with private adoption agencies to support recruitment of adoptive families for children in foster care.**
- **Statewide Foster Parent Conference - Presentation of the Adoption Coalition grant, share information about the various successes and events of coalitions, guest speaker and or training on setting up volunteer organizations.**
- **Continue to evaluate the Model**

Future Plans

- **National Adoption Day**

Involvement on the planning committee and assisting with announcements for the celebration of finalization of several adoptions in the Hot Springs area as part of a national effort held in connection with Adoption Awareness Month.

- **Foster/Adopt Pride Training**

Review of curriculum has been done plus meetings held with Mid-South Trainers to assist with addressing issues from the field.

- **Governor's Faith-Based Initiative**

Meetings have been attended with the Governor's staff regarding collaboration of the Adoption Coalition Project with the Governor's efforts to involve the Faith-Based Community in Human Services.

Coordinating efforts continue.

- **Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA)**

Efforts are underway with representatives from Arkansas Welfare Reform to collaborate in areas where adoption coalition work is underway.

- **Family Life**

Meetings have been held with a representative from this group to coordinate efforts in involving the faith based community with adoption coalition work.

Adoption Coalition Conference

Assist in the scheduling of an Adoption Coalition Conference

Objective 2 - Reduce the length of time from pre – adoptive placement to finalization by 10%

- **Task 1: Identify time for finalization of foster parent adoptions – may need to get information from Adoption Specialists if all are not captured on CHRIS.**

Completion by 9/30/06

- **Task 2: Assess the barriers of the foster parent adoption process. Completion by 9/30/06**

- **Task 3: Merge the current foster home study and adoption home study into one process/form Completion by 9/30/06**

- **Task 4: Make necessary changes to policy and practice based on the above.**

Completion by 9/30/06

Status

The Division is looking at developing a home study that will address both foster and adoptive families. Work has been completed to merge requirements of foster and adoptive families, i.e. we now require Motor Vehicle safety checks, CPR and First Aid training required for prospective adoptive parents and local criminal record checks for prospective foster parents. A committee has been working on merging the current foster home study and the adoption home study into one process.

A request has been submitted to CHRIS to request a report on the length of time from pre-adoptive placement to finalization.

Change Completion of tasks from September 30, 2005 to September 30, 2006

Responsibility for completion: Strategy 3, Community Support and Legislative Analysis, Research and Planning

Objective 3 – Increase permanency for children waiting to be adopted by 10%.

- Task 1: Monitor the results of the Adoption Recruitment Plan. **Completion dates noted in Plan.**

Completion of tasks – refer to the dates listing in the plan

Responsibility for completion: Strategy 3, Community Support and Legislative Analysis, Research and Planning

Program Improvement Plan: Strategy 3, Action Step 3.5, Implement and monitor the statewide adoption recruitment plan in order to increase homes for African American children waiting for an adoptive home and for other waiting children

Status

An aggressive statewide adoption recruitment plan has been developed for the period FFY 2005—2009. Tasks have been assigned to central office and adoption field staff for leadership in implementation of the plan. Activities are divided into three categories, including general recruitment, targeted recruitment and child specific recruitment. Accomplishment dates fall between September 30, 2005 and September 30, 2009. The recruitment plan will be monitored on a quarterly basis.

Independent Living

Outcomes

❖ *Belief: Every Child Matters*

➤ *Specific Belief: Children deserve to thrive not just survive*

➤

Belief: Our job is to empower people to help themselves

Outcome: Children will graduate from high school or get GED

Source of Information: Of the children leaving foster care at majority, receive a High School Diploma, GED, employed or in an educational vocational program. Add a dropdown box in CHRIS in the case closure button to complete from these selections.

Outcome: Children receive Independent Living services in Foster Care

Permanency Goal of other planned arrangements will be substantially achieved in:

1st year 60%,

2nd year 65%,

3rd year 75%,

4th year 85% and

5th year 95%.

Source of Information: QSPR Item 10

Outcome: Needs and Services of child, parents and foster parents will be substantially

achieved by:

1st year 70%,

2nd year 75%,

3rd year 80%,

4th year 85% and

5th year 95%

Source of Information: QSPR Item 17

❖ *Belief: People Need Family*

Outcome: Children will maintain healthy family connections, while in foster care and after leaving foster care

❖ *Belief: Our job is to empower people to help themselves*

Outcome: After foster care, youth is safe and self-sufficient (3 months, 6 months, 1 year)

- *After care services will be provided to youth leaving Foster Care

*Please Note: COA G9.8 The organization identifies when aftercare services are needed or desired, formulates a plan with the person or family to meet their needs, and follows up, as appropriate. This applies to all of the services not just IL children. G9.8 further states “The organization follows up on the aftercare plan as appropriate, when possible and with the permission of the person served.”

Independent Living Program Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Independent living services will enhance foster children being safe and self-sufficient.

Objective 1 –Develop formal job description and duties for Independent Living Coordinator positions.

- Task 1: Review current job descriptions of IL coordinators and define roles and responsibilities of the IL coordinator. **Completion by 9/30/06**

Status

The duties and functions of the IL Coordinators were reviewed in 2004 by Executive Staff and others including DCFS Personnel, Community Services and Community Support.

- Task 2: Identify job specifications needed for the IL coordinator. **Completion by 9/30/06**

Status

It was found that Coordinators' functions should first be made consistent service area to service area. This will involve clarifying the Coordinators' functions as outlined in Pub 404 and developing a functional job description that defined the Coordinators' roles in client services, case planning, case reviews and staffings and information gathering, sharing and training in their local service areas.

- Task 3: Based on the identification, make recommendations regarding the appropriate job specifications and submit for approval from Executive staff. **Completion by 9/30/06**

Status

A functional job description for IL Coordinators will be developed by DCFS Personnel and presented to Executive Staff for approval.

- Task 4: Identify IL competencies and specific training needs of this position. **Completion by 9/30/06**

Status

Competencies will be addressed in the functional job description for the position. Training needs of Coordinators have been discussed and determined. Training is needed in the use of the CHRIS system, in resource development for growth in availability of life-skills training resources, and in ways to communicate and coordinate with juvenile courts to achieve case plan goals.

- Task 5: Explore supervising needs of this position and develop recommendations. **Completion by 9/30/06**

Status

An initial recommendation concerning supervision of the IL Coordinators was to insure that, area to area, the supervisory levels/positions were the same to promote better communications between areas and to eliminate information lags

when a client moves from one area to another. Referrals and temporary placements across service area lines will be enhanced by same-level supervisory staff that know each other and have the same responsibilities. This will also reduce or eliminate any protocol problems. Additional needs will be defined.

- Task 6: Implement tasks above. **Completion by 9/30/06**

Completion of tasks by September 30, 2006

Responsibility for completion: Community Services, Community Support, Financial and Administrative Support and Legislative Analysis, Research and Planning

Objective 2 - All eligible foster youth will receive independent living services.

- Task 1: Ensure that all eligible IL children are assessed. **Completion by 9/30/07**

Status

In researching CHRIS reports, it appears that the assessment rate for youth age 14 and up has increased from 600 out of 1100 eligible youth to 830 out of 1108. This is more than a 20% increase in approximately one year. Efforts will continue until all eligible children are being assessed.

- Task 2: Either a CHRIS tickler be developed or a monthly report generated that alerts IL, FSW and supervisors when children turn 14 or enter care and are 14 or older. **Completion by 9/30/07**

Status

The 14th birthday is flagged to alert staff that a referral and an IL assessment need to be completed for youth about to turn 14. In addition, the system generates a report that flags and lists youth who have been in the system for 30 days or more without any selection of life skills training being made. Life skills training needs can only be identified by assessment and an assessment can only occur after a referral to IL is made.

Completion of tasks by September 30, 2007

Responsibility for completion: Community Services, Community Support, Financial and Administrative Support

Objective 3 - Independent Living Program Services curriculum (life skills training) will be developed based on levels (age; acquisition of skills/training) and ability of the individual youth.

- Task 1: Review all cases identified as needing life skills training. **Completion by 9/30/07**

Status

A higher proportion of youth are being referred for IL services after turning age 14 or entering care at age 14 or older. The need for life-skills training is being correlated with case planning to help ensure that life-skills needs are addressed in the case plan/transitional plan.

- Task 2: Develop a statewide curriculum detailing the 15 categories of training for children in the Independent Living program. **Completion by 9/30/07**

Status

Still in progress. Limited by availability of life-skills training resources Area to Area. As training resources increase, standardization will also improve.

Completion of tasks by September 30, 2007

Responsibility for completion: Community Services, Community Support, Financial and Administrative Support and Legislative Analysis, Research and Planning

Objective 4 – All necessary parties who will be included in case planning and service delivery for the youth be provided a copy of the IL plan.

- Task 1: Ensure foster parent, age appropriate youth and biological parent are involved in case planning. Completion by 9/30/06
- Task 2: Explore the feasibility of visits taking place in foster home. **Completion by 9/30/06**
- Task 3: Train staff to inform both birth and foster parent the importance of working together as a team. **Completion by 9/30/06**

Completion of tasks by September 30, 2006

Responsibility for completion: Community Services, Community Support, and Legislative Analysis, Research and Planning

Objective 5- Independent Living Program Services will be coordinated with other services e.g. Foster Care; Therapeutic Foster Care; Job Corps

- Task 1: Individual services will be developed for each youth - mentoring, on-the-job training, internship, volunteering. **Completion by 6/30/09**
- Task 2: Educational plans and services will be based on the youth's interests and abilities. **Completion by 6/30/09**

Program Improvement Plan: Strategy 1, Action Step 1.5 In addition to the systemic improvements to assessment and case planning included in 1.2 and 1.3 above that will impact the assessment and case planning for youth receiving independent living services, we will specifically improve the uniformity and quality of youths' independent living plan and their involvement in the development of their plan.

Completion of tasks by **June** 30, 2009

Responsibility for completion: Community Services, Community Support, Financial and Administrative Support and Legislative Analysis, Research and Planning

Staffing Goals and Objectives

- Goal - Have sufficient qualified staff to insure child safety and families are served.

Objective 1: Determine the number and qualifications (level) staff is sufficient for the Division's county operations.

- Task 1: Determine what staffing standards are needed **Completion by 6/1/06**
- Task 2: Identify and define weight of caseloads. **Completion by 6/1/06**
- Task 3: Determine current caseloads and projections of staff needed by county, area and statewide totals. **Completion by 6/1/06**
- Task 4: Develop report and analyze the results, which will be used to assist in managing staff in the field and in budget preparations. Completion by 12/1/06

Status

The workload report currently in production on a monthly basis provides by worker, county and area the number of Child Maltreatment investigations, ICPC, In Home CPS and Foster Care cases. In addition, the Personnel Unit provides a monthly report on vacancies by FSW Trainee, FSW, FSW Specialist, FSW Supervisors which is provided to Area Managers to utilize, determine and manage their staffing resources.

A caseload report is being developed for Adoption Specialist. The SACWIS system, CHRIS, is being enhanced with a new provider system by July 2005. Once that is complete, a workload report will be developed for all foster homes by resource position which are staff who will be responsible for recruiting and retaining foster homes.

Completion of tasks by September 30, 2007

Responsibility for completion: Community Services, Financial and Administrative Support and Legislative Analysis, Research and Planning

Objective 2: Recruit Staff

- Task 1: Develop a recruitment plan **Completion by 12/1/05**
- Task 2: Identify areas where recruitment is an issue and develop specific recruitment needs i.e. Spanish speaking workers. **Completion by 12/1/05**
- Task 3: Implement the plan **Completion by 3/1/06**
- Task 4: Evaluate the plan to see if it meets DCFS needs and modify based on the results of the evaluation. **Completion by 8/1/06**

Status

There are a number of employment recruitment efforts underway. The DHS Human Resources and Support section is currently attending job fairs for anyone interested in employment and universities to recruit prospective students who may be interested in working for the Division. With the help of our IV-E

partners in April and May of 2005, 3 Area Managers, an Assistant Director, and four County Supervisors attended 8 universities and college senior classes to speak to graduating students about employment opportunities in the Division. The plan is to continue this annually in the fall semester and in the spring semester classes of our IV-E partner universities and colleges.

Other efforts include identifying job share positions that will provide opportunities to those interested in working part time. These positions will visit families, conduct staffings to allow more involvement of the family. Improving methods of advertising positions so that the applicant is aware of the location, targeted recruitment at job fairs and college job fairs, meeting with universities and colleges regarding job opportunities.

Completion of tasks by September 30, 2006 – annually thereafter

Responsibility for completion: Community Services, Community Support, Financial and Administrative Support

Objective 3: Address family service worker on-call issues

- Task 1: Identify on-call options and make recommendations **Completion by 9/1/05**
- Task 2: Identify obstacles to retain staff and make recommendations **Completion by 12/1/05**
- Task 3: Implement recommendations. **Completion by 6/1/06**
- Evaluate the implementation of recommendations and modify based on results of the evaluation. **Completion by 8/1/06**

Status

Currently identifying job share positions that will provide opportunities to those interested in working part time. These positions will visit families, conduct staffings to allow more involvement of the family. DCFS needs to develop a plan for after-hour coverage by shift staff. This would relieve day staff of the burden of being on call. The plan could include a certain day or half-day during week for being in court.

Will look at the county office environment and how to improve this. Workers need access to county offices after hours. Flexible hours need to be a uniform option. It exists in policy, but varies county to county. The division will examine policy about approval of second jobs and also examine at the salary structure that may be crucial in the need for staff to have second jobs. Additionally the analysis of the Mentoring Supervisors survey results will provide information regarding retention efforts that were beneficial. Results for the FY 05 will be available by October 05. Final results will be completed by July of 2006.

Completion of tasks by September 30, 2007

Responsibility for completion: Community Services, Financial and Administrative Support and Legislative Analysis, Research and Planning

Objective 4: Retain, develop and implement incentives to retain staff, delete address on-call as this is covered under Objective 3.

- Task 1: Request funding and positions for sufficient number of staff. **Completion by 3/1/07**
- Task 2: Identify incentives needed to retain staff. **Completion by 3/1/07**
- Task 3: Implement incentives. **Completion by 6/1/07**
- Task 4: Evaluate whether incentives retained staff. **Completion by 8/1/07**

Status

Some work has been done to provide more instruction on the CLIP training plan program. Training has been provided to the Mentoring Supervisors on how to structure the CLIP plan, to the county supervisors on how to develop a training plan for CLIP and a training will be provided to all adoptions staff in July on CLIP policies and procedures. The team will look at other incentive efforts and formulate recommendations.

Completion of tasks by September 30, 2008

Responsibility for completion: Community Services, and Financial and Administrative Support

Objective 5: Develop and implement a BSW (SSA), MSW program for providing service to children and families.

- Task 1: Increase # of MSW and BSW level staff. **Completion by 1/1/07**
- Task 2: Identify other options to allow staff to complete course work for BSW and/or MSW. **Completion by 3/1/07**
- Task 3: In collaborating with the universities to develop policies and procedures for the above **Completion by 6/1/07**
- Task 4: Implement the above and evaluate the tasks. **Completion by 9/1/07**

Status

One of the goals (#11) currently being addressed is the evaluation of a plan to provide a DCFS Social Service Aide (SSA) Educational Assistance program to allow selected SSA staff to return to school at the beginning of their junior year for the purpose of obtaining a BSW or other acceptable degree. This will be a part-time degree program through the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville or one of their contracted university/college partners. Draft policy and forms are about to be placed in review. When approved, the first year cadre will consist of three SSAs.

The University of Arkansas at Fayetteville is planning to roll out a "distance education" MSW program in the fall of 2005. DCFS also reviewed a proposal to utilize the university system in Missouri to enhance the availability for northeast Arkansas DCFS staff to gain an MSW degree, but the plan was not feasible due to expense, time, and driving distances.

Completion of tasks by September 30, 2008

Responsibility for completion: Legislative Analysis, Research and Planning, Community Services, and, Financial and Administrative Support .

Objective 6: Provide additional training to supervisors.

- Task 1: Review the current supervisors curriculum and identify needed topics that will cover evidence based practice and clinical aspects of the job. **Completion by 1/1/07**
- Task 2: Review activities and learning materials from the Mentoring Supervisors project that should be a part of the supervisor training and staff development. **Completion by 1/1/07**
- Task 3: Identify the supervisory competencies. **Completion by 3/1/07**
- Task 4: Identify and develop a multi tiered supervisor training plan. **Completion by 6/1/07**
- Task 5: Develop recommendations and implement changes based on the recommendations. **Completion by 9/1/07**
- Task 6: Evaluate the tasks/training plan and modify the plan based on the results of the evaluation. **Completion by 1/1/08**

Status

There has been work done for Task 2 as the Arkansas Mentoring Supervisors project participants are developing a transitional plan as the project intervention will end September 30, 2005. The plan will include recommendations regarding those portions the intervention that was effective and which to incorporate into the supervisory training; Additionally they will provide feedback about the 2 day training, 9 on line tutorials, the structured review format and the Leadership Challenge text. This plan will be completed by September 2005. The supervisors from this project, along with other supervisors in the field will be selected to review the current curriculum, other training needs.

Completion of tasks by September 30, 2009

Responsibility for completion: Legislative Analysis, Research and Planning, Participants from the Mentoring Supervisors Project, Community Services, Community Support, Financial and Administrative Support

Any revisions in the statement of goals and objectives, or to the training plan to reflect changed circumstances.

Revisions in the Statement of Goals and Objectives

The changes were mainly in a few dates in the completion of Tasks that were changed from September 30, 2005 to September 30, 2006. These requests for change are noted at the completion date segment.

Revisions to the Training Plan

A review was conducted of the proposed DCFS Training Plan and these changes, modifications, removals, additions were made:

Where found, duplicate information was removed and any goals found in the body of the plan were moved to the section on “Division of Children and Family Services Training Goals” in the latter portion of the document.

With recent legislation addressing Relative Placement Foster Homes, language has been added in the training plan addressing the brief orientation conducted prior the immediate placement of the child, and the requirement for the home to complete training required by Licensing Standards within 6 months of placement.

In the “Current Training” section, two instances involving the idea of moving workers into the field more quickly upon graduation were removed.

- In the first instance, a trial was conducted in requiring UALR non-BSW stipends to attend two selected social work classes prior to graduation for the purpose of exempting their attendance in the first five modules of New Worker Training when employed. This trial involved only two semesters and was discontinued due to having minimal impact.
- The second instance involved a pilot program allowing UALR BSW (or equivalent degree) students, who experienced field placement in a DCFS county office during undergraduate work, to only attend Modules 2, 6, 7, 8, and OJT of New Worker Training. It was believed these students were receiving duplicate information contained in Modules 1, 2, 4, and 5 during their undergraduate study and exposure to field placement. The pilot was to evaluate if stipend students would have a greater level of knowledge than non-stipend students. Evaluation of the pilot revealed an insignificant amount of difference between the two groups, and this program was discontinued with the approval of the Division Director.

An addition was made to the “Training Needs Assessment” section under “Foster Parents” to include assessing and addressing training needs for adoptive homes. The Adoption Specialist responsible assigned to the adoptive family will assess and identify the training needs through the completion of the family’s adoption process.

Goal #10 addresses exploration of the development of a multi-tiered supervisor training program to provide advanced training for supervisors. DCFS will also determine attendance criteria to allow non-supervisor staff to attend the Leadership portion of the DCFS New Supervisor Training event. At this time the decision has been made to not allow non-supervisory staff attendance in the Leadership portion of the DCFS New Supervisor Training due to a possible perception of favoritism in future hiring's for supervisor positions. The exploration of the development of additional supervisor training will continue.

One of the goals (#11) currently being addressed is the evaluation of a plan to provide a DCFS Social Service Aid Educational Assistance program to allow three selected SSA staff to return to school at the beginning of their junior year for the purpose of obtaining a BSW or other acceptable degree. This will be a part-time degree program.

A copy of the revised training plan was provided on September 8, 2005. It had been mistakenly omitted in the original submission on June 30, 2005.

A description of the child protective, child welfare, family preservation, family support, time-limited family reunification services, adoption promotion and support services, and independent living services to be provided in the upcoming fiscal year, highlighting any additions or changes.

Status for 2005

The Division delivers services directly and purchases services from private and public agencies, universities and individuals, using state and federal funds. Programs and services of other Divisions within the Department of Human Services (DHS) are also available to clients of DCFS. Delivery of services is coordinated with other Divisions administering TEA/TANF Medicaid, Food Stamps, Social Services Block Grant and other federal entitlement programs.

DCFS continues to work with the state Community-based Child Abuse Prevention Program (CBCAP) State Lead Agency funded under Title II of CAPTA to develop child abuse prevention programs, in addition to the ones DCFS purchases.

DCFS staff provides child maltreatment investigations, assessment, case planning, referral and case management services. If a child cannot be maintained safely in their own home, DCFS will petition the court for custody and place the child in an approved foster home or licensed residential facility. The Division approves and supervises foster homes.

Direct services include the following:

Child Welfare Services is a broad category of services to children and their families and includes a variety of services described below, including Supportive Services, Child Protective Services, In-Home Support, Foster Care/Kinship Care Services, Independent Living services, and Adoption Promotion and Support.

Supportive Services - Voluntary services to families in need.

Child Protective Services - Child maltreatment investigations and protective interventions for children whose parents or legal guardians do not provide the care and protection needed for normal physical and emotional development, and assistance to the parents or legal guardians to help them fulfill their parental roles.

Family Preservation Services (direct and contract services) - Services to preserve families and protect children encompass a comprehensive continuum of services designed to address the life needs of the child and the family. In addition to protective services, family preservation includes services to families needing assistance on a voluntary basis. Services are intended to protect children, to help parents in their child-rearing role, to strengthen family functioning, and to promote the healthy development and social functioning of children.

Family Support Services - (contract services) Intensive Family Services step-down programs, deaf and language interpretation services, and tutoring services. Contractors are selected through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process. The RFP requires that they be community-based.

In-Home Support – Social Service Aides provide support services to persons or families in their homes. Services are designed to provide children or adults with personal care needed to enable them to remain home and to prevent institutionalization or another form of out-of-home care. Social Service Aides also provide parent education.

Foster / Kinship Care Services - The Division provides services to children whose biological parents cannot care for them, by providing a planned period of care by approved foster parents, including relatives who are approved as foster parents, and by planning for reunification or placement in another permanent living arrangement. Time-Limited Family Reunification services (described below) are part of the services delivered to children in foster care and their families.

Time-Limited Family Reunification (direct and contract services) - There are a limited number of situations when children cannot safely remain at home and must be separated from their family. The Division strives to preserve and strengthen the child's family ties when it is in the best interest of the child, and to protect the child by considering the child's health and safety as the paramount concern in determining whether or not to remove the child from the home. When a child must be separated from the family, DCFS will provide a healthy and safe environment and will make appropriate and timely efforts to provide services to reunite the family. DCFS will provide appropriate homes for children who cannot be reunited with their families. Relatives of children placed in the custody of the Department shall be given preferential consideration for placement, if the relative caregiver meets all relevant child protection standards and it is in the child's best interest to be placed with the relative caregiver.

Services include the following: Intensive Family Services, purchase of plane tickets for reuniting children with their families for visits and returning home, substance abuse counseling, substance abuse treatment, day care, psychological evaluation services, drug screening. **Intensive Family Services, Substance Abuse and Anger Management, Counseling, Drug Screenings and Treatment, along with the purchase of items to strengthen and promote safety of children are provided.**

Child Abuse Neglect/Prevention – The Division distributes materials throughout the State to field offices, schools, Family Resource Centers and medical facilities. These materials target the reduction/awareness of child abuse and neglect. Materials have the Arkansas Child Abuse Hotline number printed on it.

DCFS Child Protective Services staff provides and facilitates training on Substance Abuse, Anger Management and Effective Parenting. Training is geared toward

staff working directly with families, staff from Family Resource Centers and schools. DCFS Director serves on the Arkansas Child Abuse Prevention Commission (ACAPC) which provides for increased coordination of efforts between the agency, Executive Director of ACAPC, and also serves on the DCFS Advisory Committee.

The Family Resource Centers and our Human Service Workers in Schools are considered preventive programs due to the fact that families can receive assistance and not have a case in DCFS. In fact, the primary reason for these two services is to prevent the necessity of opening a case.

Intervention and Treatment - The Division offers several services to children and families. Intensive Family Services, Anger Management, Parenting Education, Interpreter Services, Psychological Evaluations, Drug Screenings, Assessments and Treatment (limited), Respite Care and Counseling are services offered to families to resolve issues that could cause removal of the child.

Adoption Promotion and Support Services (direct and contract services) - Services and activities designed to encourage adoptions of children in the foster care system when adoption is in the best interest of the child. These services include the following: in-home consultation with prospective adoptive families, adoption home studies, adoption summaries on waiting children, non-identifying summaries on adoptees, adoption subsidies, adoption registry services, respite care, therapeutic groups for foster and adopted teens, adoption and foster care recruitment activities, adoption support groups, and lifebooks for children in foster care. DCFS also trains staff, adoptive parents, foster parents, and adopted children and maintains an adoption resource library.

Independent Living Services (direct service) - Each child in DHS custody, age fourteen or older, for whom the goal is not reunification shall be provided with instruction for development of basic life skills. Each child, age sixteen or older, shall be assessed every six (6) months to determine the progress in acquiring basic life skills. Services identified in the assessment to help the child achieve independence will be provided either directly or through contract. Each foster parent caring for, or interested in caring for, a child age fourteen or older, and each Family Service Worker responsible for any children, age fourteen or older, shall receive training in helping children acquire basic life skills.

The Independent Living grant program provides service to youth in foster care that are normally unavailable through other program funds such as Title IV-E-Foster Care. Services provided are primarily educational and are intended to keep youth in school while they obtain life skills that will assist them in transitioning to adulthood. The program coordinates age-appropriate life skills training for eligible youth who are likely to remain in foster care until age 18. It assists with services and purchases that enable the youth to fulfill educational goals that may include high school graduation and post-secondary education. This includes college or university

training, vocational training, and assistance in finding career and job opportunities. In addition, the program may assist emancipated youth that choose not to continue their education past high school to establish a residence. (Youth can be emancipated by court order only.) There are many levels of assistance and instruction available to youth who choose to participate in the program. All assistance and instruction should be provided in accordance with the child's case plan.

Adoption promotion and support services – Adoption service are designed to provide caring relationships in an adoptive family to children who are, or are expected to be, legally free for adoption and whose birth parents are unwilling or unable to appropriately care for them; and a coordinated set of services for the child, the child's birth parents, and adoptive applicants/parents.

An array of services may be purchased from a variety of organizations including child welfare agencies, private psychiatric hospitals, community-based agencies, universities, other state divisions, licensed individuals, and hospitals. Services range from prevention to adoption or other permanent living situations.

Purchased Services include the following:

- Statewide comprehensive medical examinations for foster children through a contract with the University of Arkansas Medical School's Department of Pediatrics.
- Assessment, diagnosis and therapy services for adolescent sexual offenders through a contract with the University of Arkansas Medical School's Department of Pediatrics .
- Individual, family, and group therapy and various individual and group counseling services from private agencies, mental health associations, or private practitioners throughout the state.
- Professional language interpreters statewide when serving families that do not speak English.
- Deaf interpretation services statewide for families with hearing disabilities.
- Services to disabled children.
- Emergency shelters for children and teens.
- Purchased services to children in the custody and care of DCFS include therapeutic foster home programs, psychiatric residential treatment, comprehensive residential treatment, residential treatment, respite care, health services, independent living

- **Additional Adoption promotion and support services**
 - **In-home consultation visits with prospective adoptive families**
 - **Adoption home studies**
 - **Adoption summaries on waiting children**
 - **Non-identifying summaries on adoptees**
 - **Adoption subsidies**
 - **Adoption Registry services**
 - **Respite care**
 - **Therapeutic groups for foster and adopted teens**
 - **Adoption and foster care recruitment activities**
 - **Training for DCFS staff, adoptive parents, foster parents and adopted children**
 - **Adoption support groups**
 - **Lifebooks for children in foster care**
 - **Adoption resource libraries**

Updated information in the training plan, or with regard to technical assistance, research, evaluation, or management information systems that will be carried out in the upcoming fiscal year in support of the goals and objectives of the plan.

Status for 2005

Training Plan

A review was conducted of the proposed DCFS Training Plan and these changes, modifications, removals, additions were made:

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Research and Evaluation

Supervisor Review Quarterly Report – A report that provides detailed findings from child welfare case specific reviews conducted by supervisors in every county of the state. A 100% case review is required each quarter. The report provides information statewide, by area and by county. The review serves as a one-on-one training situation on individual cases for the worker and allows the supervisor to work with the worker on practice issues. It allows the supervisor to determine if the FSW knows how to utilize best practice concepts and can work with the FSW on developing those skills.

Impact of Welfare Reform on Child Welfare Reports - A report that provides information on trends in welfare reform and its effect on child welfare within the state.

Mentoring Supervisors Project – An evaluation report of the Arkansas Mentoring Supervisors Project, funded by a federal grant through the Southern Regional Quality Improvement Center of the University of Kentucky. The project is testing the impact of mentoring of supervisors and clinical supervision.

Compliance Outcome Report (COR) – A monthly report that measures compliance with 36 established performance indicators that represent a commitment to best practice.

Quarterly Performance Report (QPR) – A quarterly report that provides information on service outcomes, compliance with standards set by DCFS with guidance from the Joint Interim Arkansas legislative Children and Youth Committee and demographics of children served throughout the year.

Annual Report Card (ARC) – A report that replicates the QPR on an annual basis.

Adoption Coalitions Evaluation Report – The adoption grant is a five-year grant designed to build community coalitions throughout the state to help with general,

targeted and child-specific recruitment as well as provide adoption support to families. Quarterly adoption data reports are completed that provide information such as number of children placed in pre-adoptive homes, number of finalized adoptions and length of time from TPR to adoptive placement and finalization. The grant also includes a coalition website that is utilized to gather information on things such as memberships and activities of the coalitions. Lastly, an annual evaluation is completed to determine the effectiveness of the grant activities.

Quarterly Services Peer Review Reports – A report that provides detailed findings from comprehensive case specific qualitative reviews conducted by the Quality Assurance staff and agency staff throughout the State. This report is produced monthly with the exception of Area 6, where twice as many cases are reviewed over a two month period. This review is designed to replicate the Child and Family Service Review conducted by the federal Department of Health and Human Services.

All of the above-listed reports are planned for 2006.

Financial information comparing FY2005 State and local share spending for subpart 2 programs against the 1992 base year amount as required to meet the non-supplantation requirements. Financial information comparing FY2005 State expenditures against State expenditures under title IV-B in 1979.

Status for 2005

See Attachment

Documentation (CFS-101) of the percentage of funds the State plans to expend for each of the service categories under IV-B, subpart 2 used for IV-B, subpart 2, Promoting Safe and Stable Families Documentation (CFS-101) of the percentage of funds the State plans to expend for each of the service categories under IV-B, subpart 2 used for IV-B, subpart 2, Promoting Safe and Stable Families. For the purpose of applying for FY2006 funds, States must indicate specific percentages of IV-B, subpart 2 funds that the State will expend on actual delivery of family preservation, community-based family support, time-limited family reunification and adoption promotion and support services, as well as planning and service coordination, with a rationale for the decision. The State must have an especially strong rationale if the percentage provided is below 20 percent for any one of the four service categories and include such rationale in the APSR narrative. The amount allocated to each of the service categories should only include funds for service delivery. States should report separately the amount to be allocated to planning and service coordination. State must report FY2004 IV-B, subpart 2 expenditures for each of the four purposes and for those costs identified as administrative. An explanation must be provided for any differences between budgeted amounts and actual expenditures for the prior fiscal year.

Status for 2005

Family support – 29%

Family preservation – 41%

Time-limited Family reunification – 20%

Adoption Promotion and Support Services – 5%

Administration – 10%

The Division intends to spend at least 20% for three of the service categories. As the Division has alternate funding sources for adoption promotion and support, including the Adoption Incentive funds and the Adoption Opportunities Grant, in addition to the normal title IV-E funding, we have did not need to utilize as much title IV-B, subpart II funding for this purpose.

As utilization of this funding source for staff is a new process, it is unknown, at this time, how cost allocation will impact the usage for each purpose. This will have to be determined over the next several reporting periods.

A description of the State's progress and accomplishments made with regard to the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of the children in the State for who foster and adoptive homes are needed.

Status for 2005

Adoption - The Program Improvement Plan requires that we recruit 50 African American families for waiting children during the state fiscal year. CHRIS presently reports that we have recruited 42 African American families. We expect the figure to reach at least 50 before the end of June 30, 2005. Adoption Coalitions have been formed in Areas III, IV, VI, IX as a result of the Adoption Opportunities Act grant targeted at recruitment of adoptive families and building supports for adoptive families. During the next three years, each Area will have an Adoption Coalition. Coalitions are composed of individuals from all walks of life. There is a strong focus on the faith-based community. Rev. Martin from Texas trained adoption staff and citizens in communities throughout the state in March 2005 about the role of the church in recruiting adoptive families. Also, we have registered children on at least a couple of national adoption exchanges: USAdoptKids and Adoption1.com, plus the DCFS web site is linked to other adoption web sites. The number of inquiries is increasing. We are active in the AdoptUSKids national adoption recruitment campaign and have an Adoption Recruitment Response Team. More ads related to this campaign are appearing in Arkansas. Foster care and adoption staff are teaming up to recruit foster and adoptive families. DCFS has established an inquiry tracking system to enhance recruitment efforts. Plans are underway to enhance the DCFS web site by adding video clips of the waiting children.

DCFS has developed a statewide adoption recruitment plan for the period FFY 2005—FFY2009. This plan calls for activities that will provide diligent recruitment of foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of the children in this state. The following are recruitment activities that have been coordinated by central office adoption staff to date:

- **Pink Tomato Festival/Display Booth (Bradley County)**
- **Adoption Fair/ Display Booth/United Methodist Church (Pulaski County)**
- **Adoption Month /Display Booth/University Mall (Pulaski)**
- **Adoption/Foster Care Event/ Family Life Center (Pulaski)**
- **Pulaski Providers Fair/Display Booth /Clear Channel Metroplex (Pulaski)**
- **Conway Adoption Fair/Grace Methodist Church/Display Booth (Faulkner)**
- **Mid-South Summit/Black Expo/Clear Channel Metroplex/Display Booth (Pulaski)**
- **Child Abuse Prevention Conference/Display Booth (Garland)**
- **Arkansas Women's Conference/Holiday Inn/Display Booth (Pulaski)**

- Annual Statewide Foster Parent Conference/Presentation (Pulaski)
- McAlmont Church of Christ/Annual Health Fair/Display Booth (Pulaski)
- Dr. Derrick Lewis Foundation Blood Drive/Health Fair/St. John Baptist Church/Display Booth (Pulaski)
- Home-based/Community-based Adoption Information Meetings (6) – (Pulaski)
- Provided adoption subsidies for over 2,300 children.
- Increased the percentage of children nine years of age and older.
- DCFS became involved in the AdoptUSKids project to promote the need for adoptive and foster families through national and local media contacts.
- DCFS continued to operate the Arkansas Adoption Resource Exchange. (Website) in order to recruit adoptive families for waiting children.
- DCFS continued to be involved with the annual CBS television program, “Home for the Holidays”, that is aired in December to recruit adoptive families.
- DCFS continued to expand a five year grant to develop community based Adoption Coalitions throughout the state to recruit and support adoptive families.
- DCFS participated in national conferences sponsored by AdoptUSKids to gain knowledge and skills and to establish networks for the purpose of recruiting and supporting adoptive and foster families. Staff also participated in a regional conference (five states represented) sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for the purpose of involving the faith-based community in the recruitment of adoptive and foster families. DCFS sponsored several individuals of the faith-based community throughout Arkansas to participate in this conference.
- DCFS adoption staff provided training at several statewide conferences including those targeting mental health professionals, foster parents from the private and public sectors, and adoptive parents and professionals.

Foster Care – DCFS has developed a Foster Parent Recruitment Committee in February 2005 to provide focus and guidance to our recruitment efforts. Each DCFS Area is represented on the committee including Central Office staff from the adoptions unit, foster care unit, and planning unit. Efforts include working with the adoptions unit to display information on foster care along with adoption information at conferences. Informational materials have been provided to committee members about recruitment. Efforts have been made to purchase equipment to help with recruitment activities such as display boards, signs, and color printers. Some of the recruitment events include:

- CASA Conference in Little Rock

- **Independent Living Conference in Little Rock**
- **Division of Youth Services Conference in Hot Springs**
- **Parenting Educators Conference in Hot Springs**
- **Child Abuse and Neglect Conference in Hot Springs**
- **Foster Parent Training Conference in Little Rock**
- **Fun Day event in Union County**
- **Chicken and Egg Festival in Nevada County**
- **A Day in the Park in Bramble Park in Miller County**
- **Job Expo in Bradley County**
- **Pioneer Day in Izard County**
- **Children's Health Fair in Area 9**

An update, after consultation with Tribal organizations, of the specific measures taken by the State to comply with the Indian Child Welfare Act. States must also provide an update to the goals and activities that have been undertaken to improve or maintain compliance with ICWA.

- Identification of Indian children by the State CW services agency
- Notification of Indian parents and Tribes of State proceedings involving Indian children and their right to intervene
- Special placement preferences for Indian children
- Active efforts to prevent the breakup of the Indian family
- Use of Tribal courts in child welfare matters; Tribal right to intervene in State proceedings or transfer to the jurisdiction of the Tribe

Status for 2005

CHRIS reports that of the 3,000 children currently in foster care, two (2) children have been identified as American Indian/Native American. To ensure that DCFS is in compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act, Policy Procedure VI-AI directs the Family Service Worker to contact the Office of Chief Counsel immediately if there is any indication that the child is a member of an Indian tribe.

The five major components of ICWA that the Arkansas Plan addresses:

Identification of Indian children by the State Child Welfare Agency

Arkansas DCFS Field staff is required to ask questions to determine if a client is of Native American heritage when completing the CFS-6009 (Family Strengths and Needs Assessment). Workers are required to complete client information screens in CHRIS that identify the ethnicity of a child and family which includes a picklist to specify an individual Indian tribe. The screens that are completed in CHRIS and the picklist that identifies all recognized tribes in the U.S. is attached for your review.

In the new Family Strengths and Needs Assessment tool draft that was developed as part of the PIP (Action Step 1.2) there is a “Cultural Factors Section” which requires workers to describe any pertinent cultural influences or traditions of the household members. Do any household members speak a foreign language and need an interpreter? Is there a cultural practice that might appear to be abuse-coining, etc? Does the culture endorse physical punishment?

Does any household member claim Native American heritage (Yes or No)? If yes, what is the tribal affiliation and is the person on the tribal rolls? Could the children in this family fall under the scope of the Indian Child Welfare Act?

Notification of Indian parents and Tribes of State proceedings involving Indian children and their right to intervene

OCC attorneys have been trained on numerous occasions (twice by a staff attorney from the Cherokee Nation) on ICWA. OCC attorneys provide notification to Indian parents and tribes of state proceedings involving Indian children and their right to intervene. Michael Chase developed an ICWA handbook for OCC attorneys that is currently in final review before distribution to the OCC attorneys. The draft ICWA handbook contains draft ICWA orders, step-by-step guides to each hearing and a copy of ICWA.

Special placement preferences for Indian children

OCC has assisted CFS when the tribe identifies an Indian foster home in ensuring that Indian children are placed in accordance with the preferences outlined in ICWA. The Arkansas Juvenile Judges have also been trained on ICWA and the judges know that the agency must make active efforts to prevent removal of Indian children from their homes. The Administrative Office of the Courts provided all of the OCC Attorneys and Juvenile Judges with a copy of the Indian Child Welfare Act Checklists from the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

Active efforts to prevent the breakup of the Indian family

DCFS Staff with the assistance of the Arkansas Juvenile Judges and OCC make active efforts to prevent the removal of Indian children from their homes. There must be clear documentation during court hearings of the to prevent the removal of a child be the court grants custody to the Division. Each Arkansas Juvenile Judge uses the Indian Child Welfare Act Checklist in making decisions concerning cases where the child is of Native American heritage.

Use of Tribal courts in child welfare matters; Tribal right to intervene in State proceedings or transfer proceedings to the jurisdiction of the Tribe.

DCFS staff with assistance from OCC work with Tribal courts in child welfare matters when requested by the Tribal courts. Once a Tribal organization is notified of a native American child's involvement in the child welfare system, field staff along with OCC work with the Tribal organizations, courts or appropriate representatives to implement services that are the best interest of the child and that are recommended by the Tribal courts. If the Tribe takes jurisdiction of the case DCFS staff work with the Tribal courts to facilitate the transfer of the case and the child.

OCC attorneys have been trained on numerous occasions (twice by a staff attorney from the Cherokee Nation) on ICWA. OCC attorneys provide notification to Indian parents and tribes of state proceedings involving Indian children and their right to intervene. Michael Chase developed ICWA handbook for OCC attorneys that is currently in final review before distribution to the OCC attorneys. The draft ICWA

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Native American children age 14 or older are eligible for Chafee services just as any youth in foster care in Arkansas would be. Any youth assigned to an IL Coordinator's workload is provided an assessment and Chafee services in accordance with their case plan. These youth are neither discriminated against nor provided preferential treatment with regard to IL/Chafee/ETV services.

A report of the progress made in the description of the number of children under the care of the State child protection system who are transferred into the custody of the State juvenile justice system.

Status for 2005

Currently there are thirty-four (34) youth who began in DCFS custody and are now in Division of Youth Services custody (juvenile justice system). Twenty-one days after the child is committed, a multi-disciplinary staffing is convened to determine child's comprehensive treatment plan which includes Community reintegration. The system works well and allows youth to retain their DCFS caseworker with a DYS tracker. The Division of Youth Services reports monthly on the status of DCFS children in their custody. The report of 34 youth reflects the period 2/2004 –7/2005.

A description of the activities that the State has undertaken for children adopted from other countries, including provision of adoption and post-adoption services.

Status for 2005

The current available adoption and post adoption services would be available to families who have adopted internationally. Post adoption services include the following: information and referral, case management, adoption support groups, on-going education and training opportunities (e.g., workshops provided by MidSouth Training Academy, conferences), lending resource library, respite, Arkansas Mutual Consent Adoption Registry, and adoption assistance/subsidy (if child qualified prior to finalization of the adoption).

Post-adoption services are usually initiated by a family's contact with a DCFS Adoption Specialist. However, families may access some services without a referral from an Adoption Specialist (for example, adoption support groups). DCFS has a brochure that describes post adoption services.

In relation to this one particular case, a DCFS Adoption Specialist did not have the opportunity to work with the adoptive family since the child entered DCFS custody as a result of a FINS petition. Within in a week of being in custody, the adoptive parents signed forms to relinquish parental rights. The DCFS Family Service Worker (foster care caseworker) reported the adoptive parents did not want to address the tasks that the court required of them.

The number of children who are adopted from other countries and enter into State custody as a result of the disruption of a placement for adoption or the dissolution of an adoption, including the number of children, the agencies who handled the placement or adoption, the plans for the child, and the reasons for the disruption or dissolution.

Status for 2005

DCFS is aware of one case in which a female child from the Ukraine and placed through a private agency (name unknown at this time). The court placed custody with a family who befriended the child. Guardianship is planned with this family. The initial adoptive parents alleged the child had an attachment disorder and they want to relinquish their parental rights.

DCFS provides staff support to the Child Welfare Agency Review Board that issues licenses to agencies to practice adoption in Arkansas, including those agencies that practice international adoption. State law does not restrict an out-of-state adoption agency from arranging an adoption with an Arkansas family as long as the staff with that agency works with a private adoption agency that is licensed to practice adoption in Arkansas. Also, an agency in another state can legally work with an Arkansas attorney to arrange an adoption since attorneys are exempt from being

licensed as an adoption agency. State law does not presently require private agencies and attorneys to report adoptions to DCFS, or to any other agency.

For those States receiving an adoption incentive payment, specify the services that have been, or will be provided to children and families with the adoption incentive funds.

Status for 2005

The following have been provided with adoption incentive funds during SFY 2005:

- **Contracted services for adoption home studies**
- **Contracted services for adoption summaries on waiting children**
- **Contracted services for in-home consultation visits**
- **Home-based adoption information meetings**
- **Community-based adoption information meetings**
- **Lifebooks for foster children**
- **Recruitment Response Team**
- **Booth Rental at fairs and other community events**
- **Catering for foster/adoptive home recruitment events**
- **Travel reimbursement related to adoption recruitment events**
- **Signs for foster care and adoption displays**

If the State is awarded Adoption Incentive funds to spend in FFY 2006, those funds will be spent to provide the following services and activities:

- **Adoption and foster care recruitment activities, such as booth rental at community events**
- **Training for DCFS staff, adoptive parents, foster parents and adopted children**
- **Adoption support groups**
- **Therapeutic groups for foster and adopted children**
- **Life books for children in foster care**
- **Adoption resource libraries**
- **In-home consultation visits with prospective adoptive families**
- **Non-identifying summaries**
- **Respite care for adopted children**
- **Microfilming adoption records**

For States operating child welfare demonstration projects under section 1130 of the Act, provide a description of the accomplishments and progress in the demonstration project as they relate to the goals and objectives in the State's CFSP, where applicable.

Status for 2005

No child welfare demonstration projects exist in Arkansas.

If applicable, describe services and activities that the State currently provides or plans to provide in FY2006 that support the strengthening of parental relationships and promotion of healthy marriages.

Status for 2005

The Fatherhood Initiative is effectively assisting in joining men with their biological children. A major component of the curriculum used is to promote a solid relationship between the mother and father with the child whether they are married or not. Our Family Resource Centers (FRC's) schedule various family oriented activities throughout the year. We are aware that poverty plays a huge part in destroying strong family relationships. The FRCs seek to alleviate many of the stressors caused by poverty.

[Any other information the State wishes to include.](#)

[Arkansas does not wish to include any other information for 2005.](#)

Certification and Assurances

Certifications and assurances were submitted with the FY 2005 to 2009 CFSP. No need to re-submit as there has not been a change that would affect the certification or assurance.

**Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act
(CAPTA)**

Revised September 15, 2005

CAPTA

CAPTA Goals and Objectives

Child Abuse/Prevention

Goal – Train a minimum of two (2) workers from each county and Family Resource Centers, to teach Parenting Education, Anger Management, and Substance Abuse.

Objective – Strengthening family relationships and child well-being.

Task – Identify field workers who will be certified to teach Parenting Education, Anger Management, and give seminars on Substance Abuse.

Status – Task was completed and additional training is scheduled as new staff are added. All counties have a minimum of two (2) trained educators.

Goal – Distribute Child Abuse Prevention material to all counties for use in Field Offices, Schools, Family Resource Centers, and Medical Facilities.

Objective – Ensuring child safety by massive educational campaign targeting public awareness.

Task – Contact areas for number and type brochures needed for distribution.

Encourage a specific county observance in April, Child Abuse Prevention Month

Status – Task completed by end of February 2005.

Intervention and Treatment

Goal – Clients will have an array of services that will prevent and treat child abuse and neglect. Services will be individualized and non-intrusive. Non-English speaking clients will have interpreters to facilitate communication.

Objective – Build systems targeting Child Welfare and effective intervention with families. Language will not be a barrier.

Task – Identify, contract, and train providers/staff, who can supply appropriate quality services.

Status – Task completed. 100% of counties either had service providers or transportation to providers.

Time-Limited Family Reunification

Goal – Children and families are provided services by the least restrictive method and case termination is planned and monitored.

Objective – To reunify or provide permanency within one year.

Task – Continuing education and training to providers and staff to enhance their concurrent planning talents.

Status – Task completed. 2005 continuing education was completed.

Accomplishments

DCFS has certified staff teaching parenting education in all seventy-five counties
Instruction is given in-home and in groups. All participants are give a pre-test and

post-test to measure mastery. Behavior modification, child development and child care, anger control, and self esteem are taught through a combination of curriculum and group exercises. Staff also offers encouragement, advice, and motivation to group members.

CAPTA funds purchase parenting education training materials and paid for the certification of staff.

DCFS maintains an agreement with the Arkansas Chapter of American Pediatrics for the availability of a Physician to assist in responding to “Baby Doe” reports. Division policy outlines steps to be taken if a report comes in.

Arkansas Interpreter Services provides interpreter services for county office staff statewide with families who are not proficient in English. This service also assists workers in reading documents.

Two Fatherhood Initiatives are funded. These programs are increasingly popular and assist males from 15–34 to establish strong, effective, and responsible relationships with their children.

Child Abuse Prevention materials are purchased with CAPTA monies and used for Child Abuse Prevention month around the state and handed out when schools request them.

The yearly continuing education classes for our Family Resource Centers and our Human Services Workers in Schools is purchased out of CAPTA funds. Both of these programs are preventive by design.

CAPTA pays for the State Liaison Officer to attend the NCCAND meeting and also for the Citizen Review Panel in Jefferson County.

Selected Program Area

The Division of Children and Family Services continues to comply with its selected program area which covers improving skills of individuals serving children and families. We have raised the qualification requirements of most of our purchased service providers. We have strengthened the performance indicators to provide more accountability. We mandate continuing education for our contracted providers and staff. The majority of the services that our clients are referred to are given by either licensed or certified providers.

In addition, DCFS is involved in provider and worker skills. The majority of purchased services require staff with an advanced degree and who are licensed. Prevention program providers have to attend yearly trainings sponsored by DCFS and paid for from grant funds.

- 1. Arkansas has redesigned and piloted a more extensive assessment tool and protocol that is expected to be used later in the fiscal year. Community Services is responsible for implementation.**
- 2. Arkansas currently has 28 active Multidisciplinary Teams whose responsibility covers crisis intervention and investigation; diagnosis and treatment planning; and treatment implementation. The teams are coordinated by the Arkansas Commission on Child Abuse, Rape, and Domestic Violence.**
- 3. The DCFS Community Services Section is responsible for case management, case monitoring, service delivery and treatment. The Child Protective Services Unit in Community Services is responsible for most purchased services and provides monitoring.**
- 4. The DCFS Out-of-Home Program Administrator is a member of work group responsible for improving safety and risk. The DCFS Child Protective Services Unit does not develop or implement.**
- 5. DCFS continually updates their technological information system. It is a separate entity.**
- 6. While DCFS contracts with MidSouth Academy for staff training, the DCFS Child Protective Services Unit also facilitates staff and provider training in Drug Screening, Anger Management, Parenting Education, and case documentation.**
- 7. Child Protective Services does not plan or set policy regarding staff skills and qualifications.**
- 8. DCFS has a contract with Arkansas Commission Child Abuse, Rape, and Domestic Violence to train school staff, medical staff, daycare staff, and churches on reporting child abuse and the Maltreatment Act.**
- 9. DCFS contracts include research based information in the training of child abuse and neglect, (e.g. indicators of child abuse and neglect).**
- 10. DCFS collaborates with the Division of Developmental Disabilities to ensure compliance and refer maltreated infants 0-3 for Early Intervention Services.**
- 11. DCFS purchases handouts and child safety gadgets to inform parents**

and the public on issues of child abuse and neglect.

- 12. The Family Resource Centers and the Human Services Worker in the School Programs affords an opportunity to promote community empowerment to address the prevention of child abuse and neglect.**
- 13. DCFS works with the Division of Youth Services around improved services to children, substance abuse, and treatment modalities.**
- 14. DCFS works with the Division of Behavioral Health and the Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention, and staff from Children Hospital to address the comprehensive needs of children.**

Update of Activities To Be Implemented

The Division of Children and Family Services will fund two additional Fatherhood Initiatives in the Delta – one of the poorest parts of the State in fiscal year '06. CAPTA funds will be used to purchase child abuse prevention supplies and training materials targeting birth to age 3. With the increase of Human Services Workers assigned to districts throughout the state, a two-day training is scheduled in early September. We plan to identify a site and fund a pilot that will focus on the issues of children when they have a sibling that has been sexually abused. Oftentimes these children are not given the parental attention and support due to the needs of the abused child.

The Fatherhood Initiative assists fathers to increase their education, employment potential, and relations with child and child's mother. Fathers are assessed before beginning the program and after completing the program. The Initiative charts the strengths and assets of the father, the goals of the father, changes the father needs to make, timeframes for achievement of goals, and drug/alcohol history. The two Initiatives served a combined total of 136 fathers in SFY '05. Twenty-five (25) got a job placement; twelve (12) received their GED; twenty-one (21) received vocational education counseling; and all eight-four (84) completed the Fatherhood Curriculum. These numbers represented success.

CAPTA funds will be used to fund parenting education, fatherhood initiatives, language interpretations, training for providers, child abuse and neglect materials and supplies. No new programs are planned for FY '06.

Description of Services and Training

The Division of Children and Family Services believes that child abuse and neglect can be significantly reduced by a specific case plan where the family participates, by referrals to services offering support, instruction, and respite from the stressors caused by poverty, substance abuse, and the absence of community support. Parenting education, Counseling, Intensive Family Services, Family

Resource Centers, Fatherhood Initiatives are excellent referrals to prevent the occurrence or re-occurrence of child abuse.

All service providers and DCFS caseworkers are highly trained, skilled helping professionals who are supported and monitored to ensure best practice. In addition to staff trainers, DCFS contracts with MidSouth Training Academy and the Arkansas Commission on Child Abuse, Rape, and Domestic Violence who train professionals on issues of maltreatment, mandated reporting and assessment and case planning. Other trainings have covered substance abuse, domestic violence, child restraint, case documentation, and community resource identification.

Interpreter Services-language interpretation services provided statewide in all languages for families not proficient in English.

Parenting Education Training and Supplies-two Social Service Aides from each County Office are certified to teach Active Parenting to clients.

Fatherhood Initiatives-four programs are funded to teach fathers parenting, job training, anger management, counseling education, and relationship building.

Citizen Review Panel-one panel operates in Jefferson County. The panel reviews records, makes recommendations, and maintains an interactive helping relationship with County Office Staff.

Purchase of professional consultation pursuant to reports of medical neglect to disabled infants.

Citizen Review Panels Annual Report and Response

The most recent **Annual** Report from Jefferson County and DCFS' response **are submitted in hard copy. Many of the concerns reported related to DCFS staff turnover and inadequate staffing. Also reported as concerns were law enforcement training related to Child Abuse and Neglect basics, establishing a protocol for joint investigations, an improving communication between DCFS staff, foster and biological parents, and providing the foster parents with a history for each child, including sexual abuse and runaways. The panel recognized several actions the community took to improve CPS systems, including Department of Human Services actions. DCFS provided a report recognizing the report and actions taken by DCFS.**

Criminal background checks for prospective foster and adoptive parents and other adult relatives and non-relatives residing in the household

This requirement is covered under DCFS policy VII and VIII. Policy VII. Services to Support Foster Parents, requires the completion criminal background checks on each household member age fourteen (14) years and older. The same applies for prospective adoptive parents and other relatives in the home under Policy VIII. Services to Provide Other Permanent Living Situations. A copy of the applicable

policy will be sent with the hard copy version.

Changes

Arkansas had no changes for the reporting period of 2005.

**Chafee Foster Care Independence Program
(CFCIP)**

Revised September 15, 2005

IV-B UPDATE FOR FY2004

The Program

The Title IV-E Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) continued to operate in unison with the Foster Care Program during FFY2004 to improve information dissemination about the CFCIP Program in the ten Children and Family Services areas in Arkansas. This was done to assist in the recruitment and training of foster parents and the recruitment of teens into the program and to provide the public with knowledge of what the program can do for foster teens. Information was shared with private facilities that house foster teens in an effort to further develop a working partnership so that a broader spectrum of basic life-skills training could be provided to teens prior to their reaching the age of emancipation. A concerted effort was begun to search out professionals and academics that can assist the program in providing basic life-skills training to the grant program on an in-kind basis or for a reasonable cost. These resources can provide real world information to the teens about short and long-term situations that will affect them now and later as well as offering advice and support as a mentor would.

The Independent Living grant program provides service to youth in foster care that are normally unavailable through other program funds such as Title IV-E-Foster Care. Services provided are primarily educational and are intended to keep youth in school while they obtain life skills that will assist them in transitioning to adulthood. The program coordinates age-appropriate life skills training for eligible youth who are likely to remain in foster care until age 18. It assists with services and purchases that enable the youth to fulfill educational goals that may include high school graduation and post-secondary education. This includes college or university training, vocational training, and assistance in finding career and job opportunities. In addition, the program may assist emancipated youth that choose not to continue their education past high school to establish a residence. (Youth can be emancipated by court order only.) There are many levels of assistance and instruction available to youth who choose to participate in the program. All assistance and instruction should be provided in accordance with the child's case plan.

The eligibility and funding for IV-B, Independent Living and Educational Training Vouchers are kept separate. The Division is able to identify expenditures and funds received by each individual program. A quarterly grant report is prepared that tracks expenditures and federal monies drawn for each of the programs.

2004/2005 Goals and Accomplishments

Goal 1 – Increase the number and scope of life-skills training classes offered to IL youth.

Accomplishment – There were 319 workshops offered statewide to foster youth that covered all the training categories included in the statewide curriculum. Attendance totals (duplicated) reached 2888 for youth, 351 for staff and 290 foster parents. This also includes 81 video presentations on the various categories/subcategories of curriculum subjects.

Goal 2 – Provide initial life-skills assessments on all youth referred to a Coordinator's workload for services.

Accomplishment – Coordinators provided initial life-skills assessments on all 344 youth who were referred for IL services/assistance.

Goal 3 – Provide outreach and after-care services to youth who have left foster care and are in need of room and board.

Accomplishment – The number of youth who were assisted with this service increased from 8 the previous year to 35 for this year. The CHRIS system was enhanced to be able to record statistical, financial, and demographic information concerning the after-care clients.

Goal 4 – Develop a formal job description and duties for the IL Coordinators.

Accomplishment – A complete listing of the description of job duties and responsibilities was developed and submitted to Executive Staff for formalization and presentation to the Office of Personnel Management.

Goal 5 – Identify specific training needs of CFCIP/IL personnel.

Accomplishment – Three major categories of needed training were identified and provided : courtroom etiquette which involved and included protocols, limits, preparation, and reporting; resource development which included information on how to find and nurture life-skills training resources and employment opportunities for youth; and how to begin to include these in a statewide curriculum and resource guide for the CFCIP program.

All youth referred for IL/CFCIP services are assessed for life-skills levels and the information is provided to the primary Family Service Worker so that the case plan can include needed life-skills training. There were 903 assessments provided last year.

Staffings are held to explore and determine educational and vocational needs/plans. IL Coordinators attended 252 staffings for youth to provide input and assistance in developing plans for education, employment and life-skills training.

In addition to assisting the 82 ETV recipients with that application process, IL Coordinators and Family Service Workers also assisted these students with Pell applications and other financial assistance applications. Students were also transported to and from orientation classes/meetings, registrations, housing

searches and provided with help and instruction on enrollment in post-secondary endeavors.

There have been no expenses related to mentors and mentoring for the Arkansas CFCIP program so far. However, tentative discussions concerning a phone and on-line mentoring program for high school students and college youth have been held with the Orphan Foundation.

Month by month, 346 former foster care youth were reported in after-care situations. This was an average of 28 youth each month. In addition, 82 youth were provided ETV educational assistance.

Arkansas spent \$38,211.45 for after-care assistance for 35 youth who had aged out of foster care. This represents 4.9% of the Chafee grant. The funds were used to pay for rent, deposits, groceries, utilities and housekeeping start-up items.

Training was provided to foster parents in Areas 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9 and 10 during the year concerning Chafee programs and assistance. Training was provided to IL Coordinators in the topics of Resource Development, Courtroom Etiquette, CHRIS Enhancements, Life-skills Curriculum and protocol, IL Team Building to include Coordinators, Family Service Workers, Supervisors, Youth Advisory Board members, CASA volunteers, Attorney Ad Litem's and Juvenile Judges. In addition, MidSouth Training Academy went online with an IL training package for new and current workers and new IL Coordinators. This package is an excellent beginning point for new employees and in-service training.

Foster/IL youth from Area 6 have participated in workforce investment and school-to-work programs but it is unknown how many there actually were. The same is true for HUD Section 8 housing assistance in Areas 6 and 8.

Arkansas' assistance to post-secondary youth through the ETV grant has increased from 82 youth in school last fall to 106 enrolled with ETV assistance this fall. That is a 29% increase in ETV assistance. The entire grant for 2004 was utilized, as the 2005 grant will be.

Arkansas DCFS coordinated efforts with The Orphan Foundation of America which administers Arkansas' ETV grant to maximize outreach to eligible post-secondary youth and assisted youth with the application, documentation, approval process to reduce or eliminate housing, schedule and attendance problems at post-secondary schools. Timing of ETV applications, FAFSA documentation, Pell applications and other necessary and qualifying information has improved greatly from the initial implementation of ETV assistance.

Eighty two (82) youth received ETV in the past year.

ETV is the primary source of funding post-secondary expenses and Chafee funds cannot be used to supplement ETV assistance. Chafee will be used to assist new youth with post-secondary “cost of attendance” expenses only if the ETV grant is fully utilized. The number of youth receiving ETV assistance increased dramatically in 2005 but the average dollar amount of assistance is dropping because of the higher numbers requesting assistance. As enrollment numbers increase, fewer ETV dollars will be available to each student. The mean average dollar assistance has dropped from \$3408 to about \$3043 per student and is expected to fall to less than \$2487 this fall. Assistance has been used to provide tuition, books, fees, room and board, transportation assistance, medical insurance, daycare and clothing needs for students.

The Arkansas “Trust Fund” for IL youth that was established with funds remaining from the FFY1999 and 2000 grants was established as an incentive account for youth attending post-secondary institutions or working on their GED. Funds accumulated in their respective accounts cannot be paid until they have completed their education, aged out of care or ended their pursuit. The funds were not placed in the trust fund for any particular year, but were always intended to span several fiscal years (up to 4) before being dispersed.

Classroom and on-line training for new workers and new CFCIP Coordinators will be provided by Midsouth Training Academy. This will provide orientation training and policy/procedure requirements for the Chafee program to

This collaboration is in the planning stages for the 10 Service Areas of DCFS. Each of the service areas will be responsible for setting up meetings, information sharing, and resource development and wrap-around or enhancement services for IL youth.

The State of Arkansas currently does not extend Medicaid services to youth who have aged out of care.

Categories of clients

The Division’s Chafee Foster Care Independence Program provides services to youth between the ages of 14 to 21 to three (3) categories of clients:

1. Foster care youth and former foster care youth (including youth adopted at age 16 or older), IV-E eligible and non IV-E eligible, between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one (16-21) participating in high school, secondary school or an equivalent technical program.
2. Former foster care youth up to the age of twenty-one (21) are eligible for post-discharge services (After-care) if the youth was in foster care on his or her sixteenth (18th) birthday. Post-discharge services may include additional life-skills training. Also job search assistance, housing search assistance, community involvement, and board assistance may be provided, as funds are available.

3. Foster teens age 14-15 are provided appropriate life skills training and other services based on evaluations and assessments. These services have been provided for the past 6 years.

Policies of the Program

The Division of Children and Family Services continues to implement policy revisions regarding the Chafee legislation and to continually evaluate and revise existing policy to conform to changes in program goals, activities and services.

Accomplishments

The specific accomplishments and progress made in the past fiscal year toward helping youth make the transition to self-sufficiency; helping youth receive the education, training, and services necessary to obtain employment; helping youth prepare for and enter post-secondary training and educational institutions; providing youth personal and emotional support to youth through mentors and the promotion of interactions with dedicated adults; and meeting each of the program purposes included training and life skills workshops in the following

- Finance/Money Management,
- Vocational Planning,
- Parenting Health and Hygiene,
- Personal Appearance,
- Nutrition,
- Housing,
- Team Building,
- Self-Esteem,
- Legal Issues,
- Job Search/Vocational Planning,
- College Preparation, Duties,
- STD's/Sexual Awareness,
- Conflict Resolution and Community Resources.

2888 youth (duplicated count because youth attended more than one of the workshops presented) and 351 staff attended these workshops. In addition, 290 foster parent attended life-skills workshops with youth to monitor and assist in the training sessions.

Life-skills workshops	319
Youth initially assessed during the year	344
Youth reassessed	559
Youth 14 –15 provided CFCIP services	195

Total number of video presentations	81
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After-care services were provided to youth	35
Amount recorded in CHRIS for After-care	\$38,211

Financial Assistance – After Care Services

Provided financial, housing, counseling, employment, education, and other appropriate support services to former foster care recipients between 18 and 21 years of age.

- Room and board is for rent, utilities, deposits and food for foster teens that are age 18 or older and have emancipated from care and custody of the state. Basic housekeeping items are also included in this definition as “start-up” items to insure that needed items to begin basic housekeeping are available.
- Room and board payments for eligible youth who have aged out of foster care and request assistance will be limited in policy to up to \$500 per month for a maximum of three months, consecutive or not, and start-up assistance will be limited to a maximum of up to \$500. Start-up assistance will be limited to purchase of basic furniture and housekeeping items such as towels, sheets, cooking utensils, cleaning supplies and tools and safety items. Total assistance of up to \$2000 will be allowed for start-up and room and board. This part of the program served a portion of the 174 aged-out youth in FFY 2004. Aged-out youth who request and are referred
- Outreach for after-care services is being provided in the search for former foster youth in need of After-care Services by continuing to inform staff, foster parents, attorneys ad-litem, Youth Advisory Board members and other stakeholders of the After-care benefits, policies and procedures.

Training

Information on specific training that was conducted during federal fiscal year 2004, and is ongoing in FY 2005, in support of the goals and objectives include the following:

- Individual and group training for foster parents and teen sponsors is being provided, developed further and expanded to increase the knowledge and skills of this population in dealing with foster teens and assisting with life-skills development and reinforcement. 290 foster parents attended the various trainings and workshops. In addition, CFCIP/ETV workshops were provided for foster parents at Area and State foster parent trainings ad conferences.
- Independent Living Coordinators were provided additional training on the life-skills assessments, documentation of contacts and services and recruitment for and provision of ETV assistance. Independent Living Coordinators, Family Service Workers and supervisors were provided training on the new policy that incorporated Chafee regulations. That training is still ongoing and will continue for new workers as they are hired.
- All life-skills training continues to be available to teens (up to age 21) that have aged out of foster care. In addition, they are still eligible for one-on-one counseling and staff assistance in the areas of housing, employment, financial management and

transportation. If they choose to voluntarily remain in care after age 18 and continue their educational pursuits, they are also eligible for financial assistance with tuition, fees, books and room and board expenses through foster care, CFCIP and ETV. Teens who opt to leave care at age 18 or before age 21 will remain eligible for financial assistance with start-up items and room and board on an as-requested, funds-available basis and will remain eligible for ETV assistance based on educational progress. Policy and procedure to comply with the CFCIP legislation is being revised concerning the eligibility and limitations of financial support for former foster care clients. Services are also available to adoptees that were formerly in foster care.

Classroom and on-line training for new workers and new CFCIP Coordinators is provided by MidSouth Training Academy. This training will provide orientation training and policy/procedure requirements for the Chafee program to DCFS staff. Plans for 2006 include working with MidSouth to make this training available to DCFS foster parents. The on-line training includes basic information about outcomes for foster care youth; practice strategies that can increase the opportunities for successful independent living; services available through CFCIP; the responsibilities for those involved with the youth; and policies/procedures that provide for services to youth eligible for Independent Living Services through CFCIP. The on-line training is available to all DCFS staff

Topics for life skills workshops for 2006, provided or arranged through the Independent Living Coordinators will include the following:

Finance/Money Management, Vocational Planning, Parenting, Health, Hygiene, Personal Appearance, Nutrition, Housing, Team Building, Self-Esteem, Legal Issues, Job Search, College Preparation, STD's/Sexual Awareness, Conflict Resolution, and Community Resources.

Support Services

Personal and emotional support to youth was provided through mentors and the promotion of interactions with dedicated adults by conducting the following:

- Youth Advisory Board - Youth representatives on the board are becoming more involved in the agency and political processes that will assist the board in being effective as an advocacy group that will be listened to. Their focus is on understanding the system and assisting with the development of new ideas, policy and methods that will enhance services for themselves and other foster youth.

Teen Conference - The Fourteenth Annual Teen Conference was held June 2-4, 2004. Arkansas' CFCIP coordinated and presented the conference instead of using CFCIP funds to contract for this service. There were 119 youth, IL Coordinators, Family Service Workers plus guests and presenters for this conference. The cost of the conference was \$18,745. Youth are immersed in activities that promote team building, decision making, self esteem, social interaction and other interpersonal skills in a very positive atmosphere

Arkansas Transition to Adulthood Conference (ATTA) – The first ATTA conference was held September 21-23, 2004 in Little Rock. There were 187 attendees that included foster teens, foster parents, Youth Advisory Board members, Family Service Workers, IL Coordinators, Area and State program Supervisors and managers, Office of Chief Counsel staff, DYS (Youth Services) staff, managers, case trackers and facility personnel, CASA volunteers, attorneys-ad litem, juvenile justice representatives and service providers. The cost of the conference was \$112, 959 and included general sessions and workshops conducted by individuals nationally known for their experience and involvement in transitional and independent living programs and issues. Region 6 was also represented. The conference was set up and conducted with the assistance of the National Resource Center for Youth Services from the University of Oklahoma.

In federal fiscal year 2004, the total unduplicated number of youth served was 812. This includes youth for which direct paid-for services were provided as well as youth who were provided services such as life-skills training for which no direct cost was attached.

*The annual salary for the nine (9) employees paid out of the Independent Living Grant is \$207,668.64. Fringe at 30% is \$62,300.59. Total salary + fringe = \$269,969.23. This figure will increase for FFY 2004 as additional Area Coordinators are added to the grant.

Trust Fund Incentive Program

A trust fund is a treasury account budget in the Arkansas Administrative Statewide Information System that provides youth with financial and other appropriate support and services designed to help them transition to adulthood. For Arkansas, the trust fund program for youth receiving independent living services or transition assistance is described as the Educational Incentive Trust Fund for Post-Secondary Students. The fund provides an incentive savings account for students pursuing post-secondary educational goals to that upon completion of the course, aging out of the CFCIP system or being unable to continue or completed the course; there will be funds available to the student. Funds will also help with start-up expenses, housing expenses and other expenses required to complete the transition into adulthood and productivity.

It is estimated that the AR-CFCIP program will expend approximately \$32,000 on 26 former foster youth through the Arkansas Trust Fund Incentive Program during FFY 2005. This will include youth who were enrolled in 4-year colleges, 2-year colleges, vocational-technical schools and trade schools and who successfully completed college semesters or courses of study in other accredited schools prior to their cases being closed or aging out of care.

The Division of Children and Family Services, with approval from Region VI office of the Administration for Children and Families established educational incentive trust funds on June 21, 2002, for youth leaving foster care.

Youth Served FFY 2004—20

Beginning Balance Available - \$153,487

Committed to Date - \$131,750

Current Available Funds- \$21,737

Expended to date--\$55,250

Projected expenditures FFY 2005--\$32,000

A description of and the agreement for funding, accumulation and disbursement of funds in this incentive account follow on the next seven (7) pages.

CHAFEE FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM

EDUCATIONAL INCENTIVE TRUST FUND FOR POST-SECONDARY STUDENTS

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

AUTHORIZATION FOR ESTABLISHMENT

Written notification was received from the Region VI office of the Administration for Children and Families on May 26, 1994 indicating the amendments to the Arkansas Chafee Foster Care Independence Program grant application establishing educational incentive trust funds for youth leaving foster care were acceptable. The notification indicated that the request had been reviewed and been found to comply with requirements provided in ACYF-PI-93-16 and that the information concerning Arkansas' Independent Living Trust Funds was permanent and would remain in effect unless it is rescinded, after notification in writing, to the Commissioner of ACYF.

SOURCE OF FUNDING FOR THE CFCIP TRUST FUND ACCOUNT

The sole source of funding for the Educational Incentive Trust Fund account will be any unencumbered, unexpended funds remaining in any Independent Living grant account on September 30 of the second year that a particular grant award covers. Independent Living grants are awarded for each Federal fiscal year (October 1 through September 30) and are allowed to be expended during two federal fiscal years. e.g. The grant award for the Federal fiscal year October 1, 1996 through September 30, 1997 (FFY1997) may be expended until September 30, 1998. Any funds remaining on September 30, 1998 would be transferred to the Incentive Trust Fund Account. At the point the Educational Incentive Trust Fund is depleted, the program will cease operation and close any and all associated active accounts. No further incentives will accumulate or be credited to any student's account for payment.

Any funds that remain in the Educational Incentive Trust Fund account for a period of six (6) months and are not anticipated to be paid out during that state fiscal year may be placed with the Investment Section of the State Treasurer's Office for deposit to an interest bearing Certificate of Deposit for a period of (not to exceed) three (3) months.

PURPOSE AND USE OF THE CFCIP TRUST FUND ACCOUNT

To provide an incentive savings account for students pursuing post-secondary educational goals so that upon completion of the course, aging out of the CFCIP system or being unable to continue or complete the planned course, there will be funds available to the student to utilize for additional educational expenses, graduation expenses, start-up expenses, housing expenses or other expenses required to complete the transition into adulthood and productivity.

CLIENT ELIGIBILITY FOR PARTICIPATION

Youth who choose to remain in foster care after graduating from high school and enroll in post-secondary educational pursuits such as college, junior college, vocational-technical school or trade school and who sign a post-secondary education participation agreement will be eligible to accrue incentive credits in a ledger account established under their name.

Eligibility will continue for as long as the student is enrolled and incentives will accrue until (1) the educational pursuit is completed (2) the student withdraws from the educational program or, (3) their 21st birthday occurs. At that time, their eligibility will cease and any funds accrued in their account will be paid to them.

PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT AND CRITERIA

Youth who participate in post-secondary educational programs will only be eligible for incentive credits for as long as a signed contract following the guidelines below is in force.

Chafee Foster Care Independence Program

Contract

For _____

Youth Name

- The youth must be enrolled as a full time student in an accredited institution or he/she will be dismissed from foster care. Youth will apply for and keep active Federal Pell Grant and other available grants and scholarships.
- The youth will maintain a minimum grade point average of 2.0.
- The youth will provide a copy of each semester's grades to the FSW. Youth will agree to sign a release for Worker to obtain information from the institute regarding youth's class schedule, grades, attendance records, and financial aid status.
- The youth will attend all scheduled classes. The youth will contact their Sponsor or CFCIP Coordinator, if they have already acquired 2 absences, for written permission to miss any additional classes.
- The youth will attend a minimum of 10 scheduled Basic Life-Skills Training workshops and/or activities annually.
- The youth will attend DCFS staffings in order to actively participate in establishing, updating, and following their case plan.
- The youth may attain and maintain a job that does not interfere with academic endeavors to assist with support.
- The youth will maintain contact with their sponsor and FSW Worker at least twice monthly totaling 4 monthly visits, unless a waiver has been approved.
- The youth will notify caseworker of any changes in school, work and/or living arrangements within two (2) days of said change.
- The youth will not partake of alcohol, drugs or substances that are not prescribed. Any positive urine analysis may result in immediate dismissal from the IL Program. Youth agrees to submit to random UA when requested.
- The youth may be dismissed from the IL Program if he/she is found guilty of any illegal activity.
- If teen exhibits inappropriate behavior that demonstrates his/her inability to work with Worker, Sponsor, and CFCIP Coordinator; he/she will be dismissed from the IL Program.
- Failure to comply with all contract statements will result in a 'Determination Staffing'.

Outline of Responsibilities:

Freshmen

- Youth will live in a foster home, with their CFCIP Sponsor or if Worker allows, in dorm housing.
- Youth must maintain and pass 15 credit hours each freshmen semester (12 credit hours of basic courses + 3 credit hours of electives).

Upper Classmen

- Youth may live in own residence if the residence is in compliance with *Independent Youth's Residence Checklist (CFS – 370)*.

- No roommates will be allowed for upperclassmen residing in their own residence.
- Youth will comply with all rules and regulations set forth by the landlord. This includes all signed rental and lease agreements.

Sponsor

- Sponsor will attend all staffings and make sure the youth is abiding with the terms of the established case plan.
- Sponsor will assist the youth in maintaining a budget of monthly income and expenses.
- Sponsor will visit the youth twice monthly and will notify Worker of any problems detected during the visit.
- Sponsor will receive and disburse monthly board payment to youth based on the current budget plan.

Family Service Worker

- Worker will initiate an appropriate board payment for youth based on the current budget needs while the youth is in foster care.
- Worker will notify youth and Sponsor, and IL Coordinator of staffings.
- Worker will visit youth weekly, unless a waiver is approved.
- Worker will maintain monthly contacts with Sponsor (can be telephone or e-mail contacts).
- Worker will provide CFCIP Coordinator with a copy of youth's class schedule at the beginning of each semester.
- Worker will provide CFCIP Coordinator with youth's grades, attendance records and financial aid status within seven (7) days of each semester's end.

Chafee Foster Care Independence Program Coordinator

- Coordinator will request CFCIP funding for youth if he/she qualifies.
- Coordinator will notify FSW Supervisors, Youth and Sponsor of all workshops, trainings and activities.
- Coordinator will assist youth in finding resources to prepare him/her for independence.

Participation in the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program will end when the youth has:

- Reached 21st birthday
- Achieved independence to the extent that financial support and social services are no longer needed.
- Made a voluntary decision to no longer participate in the IL Program, therefore leaving Foster Care.

OR

- Demonstrated unwillingness or the inability to meet the requirements of the IL Program and the terms of the agreement established in the case plan.

I join in an agreement as to the specified conditions of the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program. I have read, understand and voluntarily agree to abide with the contract terms.

_____	_____	_____	
Youth's Signature	Date	Sponsor's Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____	
Family Service Worker	Date	CFCIP Coordinator	Date

ACCUMULATION OF INCENTIVE CREDITS:

For Four-year School Attendance:

A credit of \$500 will be posted to the student's ledger account for each full, spring or fall, semester that is completed in accordance with the student's contract/agreement concerning grade point and hours completed.

A maximum credit of \$250 will be posted to the student's ledger account for each completion of six (6) hours or more of courses during summer terms between freshman and sophomore terms, sophomore and junior terms and junior and senior terms. The total allowable incentive to be posted under this category is \$4750.

For Two-year or Junior College Attendance:

A credit of \$500 will be posted to the student's ledger account for each full, spring or fall, semester that is completed in accordance with the student's contract/agreement concerning grade point and hours completed.

A maximum credit of \$250 will be posted to the student's ledger account for completion of six (6) hours or more of course completion during summer terms between first and second years.

For Vocational-Technical School Attendance:

For each six (6) months of study/course time required to complete a vocational-educational study plan in accordance with the student's contract/agreement, a maximum of \$500 will be credited to the student's ledger account.

For Specialty and Trade School Attendance:

For a training/course period lasting 3-6 months, a maximum of \$500 will be credited to the student's ledger account if completed in accordance with the student's contract/agreement. If the course/training lasts more than 6 months, an additional \$500 will be credited to the student's ledger account for each additional 6-month period or portion thereof after the initial 6-months are completed.

For GED Training:

For attending GED courses, completing and passing the final GED examination and receiving the GED Certificate according to the terms of the student's contract/agreement, a maximum of \$750 will be credited to the student's ledger account.

Under no circumstance will the total credited to any student's incentive ledger account exceed \$4750.

PAYMENT OF ACCUMULATED INCENTIVE CREDITS:

A payment of the accumulated incentive credits may occur at one of the three following times:

1. The educational course is completed.
2. The student's 21st birthday occurs.
3. The student withdraws from the educational course. Credit will be given up to the last full semester or course completed.

The student's case must be closed and notification forwarded to the Independent Living Unit Manager. The Unit Manager will confirm and verify the total accumulated incentive as recorded in the ledger account for that student and notify, in writing, the Chief Financial Officer for the Division of Children and Family Services of the client name, case number, address and the amount of the state warrant to be issued in payment.

Once an incentive accumulation has been verified and paid and the case closed, no other educational incentives may be accumulated for and paid to the student. If a student continues in a post-secondary educational plan after receiving their GED, they may continue to accumulate credit until one of the above three occurrences takes place.

Adoption and Foster Parent Recruitment Plans

ADOPTION RECRUITMENT PLAN FFYS 2005 –2009

Introduction

In June 2004, Arkansas had a pool of one hundred ninety-six (196) approved families waiting for children. Of that 196, 52 or 27% were African-American and 144 or 73% were White. The percentage of African American families has increased from 22% in the FFYS 2000-2004 recruitment plan.

Arkansas had four hundred ninety-eight (498) children waiting to be adopted at the end of SFY 2004. Seventy-six or 15% of these children are living in preadoptive homes. Four hundred twenty two children with parental rights terminated were not placed in adoptive homes. Twenty six per cent of the children available for adoption were African American. Sixty three per cent were Caucasian.

At the end of June 2004, there were 3,241 children in foster care, 58% white, 30% African-American, 7% more than one race, and 4% Hispanic. Ages were 25% between the ages of 6 –11, 23% between the ages of 12 – 15, 21% between the ages of 2 – 5, 18% between the ages of 16 – 18, 10% between the ages of 0 – 1 and 1% 18 or older. 50% of these children are male and 50% are female.

Given the characteristics of children described above and the families available for placement, the Division of Children and Family Services will use the strategies outlined in this plan to locate and develop adoptive home resources to meet the needs of waiting children.

Goal I: To improve DCFS' general adoption recruitment and retention efforts

Objective 1: To increase awareness and education of all DCFS/DCO clerical staff concerning adoption.

Task 1: Feature a waiting child or sibling group in the DHS newsletter.

Accomplish Date: September 30, 2005

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Services Unit

Secondary Responsibility: DHS Communications Director

Task 2: Develop statewide curriculum and provide training for DCFS/DCO clerical staff on the new web-based adoption inquiry process.

Accomplish Date: September 30, 2005

Lead Responsibility: CHRIS/Adoption Field Services Manager/Adoption Services Unit, Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Supervisors and County Administrators

Task 3: Conduct ongoing continuing education training on adoption for Family Service Workers, Foster and Adoptive Parents, Adoption Specialists, Mental Health Workers, and Community Providers. This will include training that addresses work with diverse cultures, linguistics, racial, and economic communities.

Status

Central Office Adoption Services Unit staff received training on kinship care, adoption subsidy, and the impact of methamphetamines on the community, family, and children. Central Office Adoption Services Unit staff, Adoption Specialists, Adoption Supervisors, and Administrators received training on selecting adoptive families for children in March 2005. The National Resource Center for Special Needs Adoption provided training at the annual Mental Health Conference in August 2004. Approximately, 150 foster and adoptive parents and professionals attended the statewide adoption conference in April 2005. Kenneth Watson from West Virginia was the keynote speaker. Plans are underway for another statewide adoption conference in November 2005 with Deborah Hage as the keynote speaker. DCFS adoption staff presented four workshops at the annual foster parent training conference in May 2005.

Accomplish Date: September 30, 2005

Lead Responsibility: MidSouth Training Academy/Adoption Field Services Manager/Adoption Services Unit, Secondary Responsibility: Professional Development Unit

Objective 2: To promote awareness and education among community organizations

Task 1: Develop a statewide plan for awareness and education on adoption.
Accomplish Date: September 30, 2005

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Services Unit/Adoption Field Services Manager
Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Supervisors

Task 2: Develop area plans for awareness and education on adoption.
Accomplish Date: September 30, 2005

Lead Responsibility: Area Adoption Supervisors/Adoption Specialists
Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Field Services Manager/Adoption Services Unit

Task 3: Utilize support groups, speakers bureaus, faith-based groups and other community groups.
Accomplish Date: September 30, 2008

Lead Responsibility: Area Adoption Supervisors/Adoption Specialists

Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Field Services Manager/Adoption Services Unit

Objective 3: To explore post-adoption services

Task 1: Mail letters regarding the availability of post-adoption services to subsidized adoptive families and foster families

Accomplish Date: September 30, 2005

Task 2: Complete a survey with adoptive families on the need for post-adoption services.

Status

Research is underway to develop a survey and to complete it by the established date.

Accomplish Date: September 30, 2005

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Services Unit/Planning Unit

Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Field Services Manager

Task 3: Use results of post-adoption services survey findings to develop and expand post-adoption services.

Status

Once the survey is completed and assessed, work will begin on expanding post-adoption services.

Accomplish Date: September 30, 2006

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Services Unit

Secondary Responsibility: Policy Unit/Planning Unit

Objective 4: To monitor the progress of the Adoption Recruitment Plan on a quarterly basis

Task 1: Utilize the monitoring tool to monitor progress of recruitment efforts.

Accomplish Date: September 30, 2005

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Field Services Manager/Adoption Services Unit

Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Supervisors/Adoption Specialists

Goal II: To provide targeted recruitment efforts to find homes for waiting children

Objective 1: Each Adoption Specialist will recruit and retain a minimum of ten (10) African American families per year for the next five (5) years (Exception: If the geographical area of one of the Adoption Specialists has less than 5% African American population their minimum number may be

adjusted accordingly, but the statewide total will supplement the reduced number).

Task 1: Include in Area Recruitment Plan, the plan for recruiting and retaining African American homes to address this objective.

Accomplish Dates: September 30, 2005 – 10 Families
September 30, 2006 – 10 Families
September 30, 2006– 10 Families
September 30, 2008 – 10 Families
September 30, 2009 – 10 Families

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Specialists/Adoption Supervisors

Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Field Services Manager/Adoption Services Unit

Task 2: Coordinate and develop media presentations, written materials, and information packets (to include information related to home study process and agency access) to recruit African American families.

Accomplish Date: September 30, 2005 and on-going

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Supervisors/Adoption Specialists

Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Field Services Manager/Adoption Services Unit

Task 3: Establish working relationships with a minimum of ten (10) local community based groups each year per Area.

Accomplish Dates: September 30, 2005 - 10 Groups
September 30, 2006 – 10 Groups
September 30, 2006 – 10 Groups
September 30, 2008 – 10 Groups
September 30, 2009 – 10 Groups

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Specialists/Adoption Supervisors

Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Field Services Manager/Adoption Services Unit

Task 4: Develop and maintain at least one adoption support group in each Area.

Accomplish Date: September 30, 2005

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Specialists/Adoption Supervisors

Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Field Services Manager/Adoption Services Unit

Objective 2: Recruit and retain adoptive families for teens, children with severe disabilities, and sibling groups of three or more.

Task 1: Coordinate and develop media presentations, written materials, and information packets (to include information related to the home study process and agency access) to recruit adoptive families for teens, children with severe disabilities, and sibling groups of three (3) or more.

Accomplish Date: September 30, 2005 and on-going

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Supervisors/Adoption Specialists

Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Field Services Manager/Adoption Services Unit

Task 2: Establish working relationships with a minimum of ten (10) local community based groups, for teen recruitment each year per Area.

Accomplish Dates: September 30, 2005 - 10 Groups

September 30, 2006 – 10 Groups

September 30, 2006 – 10 Groups

September 30, 2008 – 10 Groups

September 30, 2009 – 10 Groups

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Specialists/Adoption Supervisors

Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Field Services Manager/Adoption Services Unit

Task 3: Establish and maintain at least one post adoption service per Area

Status

An email has been forwarded to Adoption Supervisors regarding post adoption services. This topic will be discussed at an Adoption field staff meeting in July 2005.

Accomplish Date: September 30, 2006

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Specialists/Adoption Supervisors

Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Field Services Manager/Adoption Services Unit

Goal III: To identify and recruit appropriate adoptive families for specific waiting children

Objective 1: Complete a web site and photo-listing registration on all waiting children with special needs.

Task 1: Identify children with special needs who are legally free for adoption, are not placed with an adoptive family, and are not registered on the DCFS web site and photo-listing.

Accomplish Date: September 30, 2005 and on-going

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Specialists/Adoption Supervisors

Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Field Services Manager/Adoption Services Unit

Task 2: Prepare web site and photo-listing registration packets on the waiting children.

Accomplish Date: September 30, 2005 and on-going

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Specialists/Adoption Supervisors

Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Field Services Manager/Adoption Services Unit

Task 3: Enter the registration of waiting children onto the web site and photo-listing.

Accomplish Date: September 30, 2005

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Services Unit

Objective 2: Develop placement resources with private and public agencies for waiting children with special needs.

Task 1: Develop a network with private and public agencies to increase the resource of approved adoptive applicants for waiting children with special needs.

Accomplish Date: October 1, 2005 and on-going

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Services Unit/Adoption Field Services Manager

Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Supervisors/Adoption Specialists

Task 2: Develop recommendations for purchase of service for the adoption of specific Waiting children with special needs.

Status

A draft proposal has been developed and revisions are being made. It will then be Presented to the DCFS Director.

Accomplish Date: September 30, 2005

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Field Services Manager/Adoption Services Unit

Secondary Responsibility: Policy Unit

Objective 3: Implement a child specific recruitment plan

Task 1: Complete a child specific recruitment form on every waiting child.

Status

An email has been forwarded to the Adoption Supervisors. This topic will be discussed at an Adoptions field staff meeting in July 2005.

Accomplish Date: September 30, 2005 and on-going

Lead Responsibility: Adoption Specialists/Adoption Supervisors

Secondary Responsibility: Adoption Field Services Manager/Adoption Services Unit

Objective 4: Identify and utilize available community resources to find families for specific waiting children with special needs.

Task 1: Identify during concurrent planning families who have significant ties to a waiting child and determine if it is appropriate to consider the families for adoption placement.

Accomplish Date: September 30, 2005 and on-going

Task 2: Plan and implement at least five activities during the federal fiscal year to recruit adoptive families for specific waiting children per Area.
Accomplish Date: September 30, 2005 and on-going

Plans for Intercountry Adoptions

Federal Requirement: A description of the activities that the State has undertaken for children adopted from other countries, including the provision of adoption and post-adoption services. This will include the number of children who are adopted from other countries and who enter State custody as a result of disruption for adoption or the dissolution of an adoption, the agencies who handled the placement or the adoption, the plans for the child, and the reasons for the disruption or dissolution.

Status

The current available adoption and post adoption services would be available to families who have adopted internationally.

DCFS is aware of one case in which a female child from the Ukraine was placed through a private agency (name unknown at this time). The court placed custody with a family who befriended the child. Guardianship is planned with this family. The initial adoptive parents alleged the child had an attachment disorder and they want to relinquish their parental rights.

Foster Care Recruitment Plan

GOAL

Recruit foster families in sufficient numbers to meet the needs of children in foster care.

Objective 1

Increase awareness and education of DCFS and DHS staff concerning foster care needs.

Tasks

- (1) Develop and distribute informational materials
- (2) Develop a structured response to inquiries received at the county/area/central offices
- (3) Develop a uniform inquiry packet to include information on foster care and adoption to send to all inquiries (statewide, area, county)
- (4) Utilize existing communication mechanisms (newsletters)
- (5) Inform DCFS workers of the types of foster homes most needed (CORE and continuing education)
- (6) Encourage efforts to explore relative placements (kinship care homes)

Status

- **Foster Care and Adoptions shared a large bulletin board promoting adoption and foster care in the entry hall of the DHS office building in November and December 2004.**
- **A Foster Home Recruitment Committee has been developed and includes representatives from each DCFS Area, Foster Care Unit, Adoptions Unit, Foster Care Ombudsman, Adoption Coalition Administrator, and Planning. The committee has met monthly since February, 2005.**
- **An informational brochure has been developed entitled “Each One, Tell One”. The information includes state data on the number of children in foster care and the types of children who need foster homes (siblings, teens). The purpose of the brochure is to engage the readers in our recruitment efforts. The brochure can be adapted to include county/area specific information.**
- **A recent endeavor is to have regular inquiry meetings at the county level. Efforts are underway to develop a Powerpoint presentation for staff to use at the meetings. The purpose of the meetings is to begin the process of becoming a foster parent and to inform the participants about foster children and foster parenting.**
- **The Recruitment Committee has been working on developing an inquiry packet to be sent to those who inquire about foster care and/or adoption. The packet would include information about**

standards for approval for foster family and adoptive homes and would be sent out after the inquiry call.

- **The DCFS Newsletter, Connections, and the Foster Parent Newsletter, Foster Pride, have contained articles about our recruitment efforts and our plans for recruitment.**
- **Recent legislation allowing Provisional Relative Foster Homes has encouraged relative placements. Policy is in development.**

Completion of Tasks by June 30, 2006 and ongoing

Responsibility: Community Services, Community Support, and Planning

Objective 2

Enlist the support of DCFS Foster Parents to assist in recruitment efforts.

Tasks

- (1) Meet with foster parent support groups/associations
- (2) Identify ways foster parents can assist in recruitment efforts
- (3) Develop a foster family recruitment kit
- (4) Communicate with foster parents through the Foster Pride newsletter
- (5) Provide information at the State Foster Parent Conference
- (6) Provide information at the Area conferences
- (7) Send information to foster parent support groups
- (8) Inform prospective foster parents through pre-service training about the types of children needing care

Status

With the recent hiring of the Foster Parent Ombudsman, efforts will increase in working with the foster parents.

A workshop was held at the State Foster Parent Conference on the topic of Foster Parent and Adoption Recruitment. The workshop was well attended. The participants expressed eagerness in helping with recruitment and voiced many good ideas.

Completion of Tasks by June 30, 2006 and ongoing

Responsibility: Community Services, Community Support, and Planning

Objective 3

Increase awareness and education of the community concerning foster care needs.

Tasks

- (2) Develop and implement strategies for communication with the community
 - DCFS partners
 - Faith community
 - Social organizations
 - Professional organizations

- Service providers
- Business community
- General public

Status

A faith-based organization has offered to help DCFS with recruitment.

Informational reports have been shared with the Family Council. Plans include a meeting with a representative of this organization to coordinate our work together.

- (3) Participate in conferences/meetings (display booths, informational materials, speakers)

Status

Booths and informational materials were displayed at the following conferences:

- **CASA Conference in Little Rock**
- **Independent Living Conference in Little Rock**
- **Division of Youth Services Conference in Hot Springs**
- **Parenting Educators Conference in Hot Springs**
- **Child Abuse and Neglect Conference in Hot Springs**
- **Foster Parent Training Conference in Little Rock**
- **Fun Day event in Union County**
- **Chicken and Egg Festival in Nevada County**
- **A Day in the Park in Bramble Park in Miller County**
- **Job Expo in Bradley County**
- **Pioneer Day in Izard County**
- **Children's Health Fair in Area 9**

- (4) Distribute materials

Status

Informational materials on foster care and adoption have been distributed at all the conference display booths listed above.

Completion of Tasks by June 30, 2008 and ongoing

Responsibility: Community Services, Community Support, and Planning

Objective 4

Support Area and County staff recruitment plans and efforts.

Tasks

- (1) Review current Area/County recruitment plans and foster family needs assessments
- (2) Identify targeted and child-specific recruitment needs
- (3) Incorporate targeted and child-specific needs into Statewide-Area-County plans

- (4) Develop a recruitment guide
- (5) Develop and distribute recruitment tools (brochures, flyers)
- (6) Research recruitment materials and tools
- (7) Identify Area/County needs for recruitment materials and tools

Status

The Area/County Recruitment Plans have been reviewed and are compatible with the statewide Foster Parent Recruitment Plan. Through the Recruitment Committee, we have identified several items that would assist the field in their recruitment efforts. Information on recruitment and retention has been distributed to the members of the committee to guide them in their efforts. Color printers and display boards have been purchased for each Area. We are working on a Powerpoint presentation for field staff to use in inquiry orientation meetings. We plan to purchase items such as laptop computers to help the Areas with their meeting presentations. We plan to purchase some pamphlets on foster care and distribute to the Areas.

Completion of Tasks by June 30, 2006

Responsibility: Community Services, Community Support, and Planning

Objective 5

Coordinate with Adoption recruitment

Tasks

- (1) Partner in the development of a uniform structured inquiry response
- (2) Partner in the development of a inquiry packet
- (3) Partner in participation at conferences (display booths, informational materials)
- (4) Partner in utilization of resources
- (5) Support the development and implementation of adoption grants and initiatives

Status

The Foster Parent Recruitment Committee includes Adoption Staff. They have input into the development of the recommendations for the inquiry response and the inquiry packet. We have included information about adoptions at all of the conferences we have had display booths,. Foster Care Recruitment has benefited from the Adoption Incentives Grant and the Adoption Opportunities Grant as these funds have been used to purchase items for recruitment such as color printers, display boards, signs, and conference booth fees.

Completion of Tasks by June 30, 2006 and ongoing

Responsibility: Community Services, Community Support, and Planning

Objective 6

Monitor and Revise Plan

Tasks

- (1) Identify mechanisms to track activities (inquiries, applications, approvals)
- (2) Monitor and analyze data

- (3) Develop budget request for funds for Area/County recruitment needs
- (4) Develop quarterly progress reports
- (5) Review and revise plan annually

Status

In September 2004, the foster parent and adoption inquiry process became web-based. Reports became available on CHRIS reporting inquiries for foster parenting and for adoption. Many changes in the CHRIS system will occur in July. We will then develop monitoring systems for available reports.

Foster parent recruitment has relied on funds from the two adoption grants. Since over 60% of our adoptions are with our foster parents, it is a logical step. A request has been made to our DCFS CEO of Finance to allocate funds for Foster Home recruitment in SFY2006. We have requested purchase of recruitment items with unspent funds from one of the adoption grants.

Completion of Tasks by June 30, 2007

Responsibility: Community Services, Community Support, and Planning

Lead Parties

- Recruitment Committee
The Recruitment Committee will include representatives from each Area and representatives from Central Office Foster Care, Adoptions and Planning Units
- Each Area has designated a lead person to coordinate recruitment efforts

Status

The Recruitment Committee has been in existence since February 2005. There have been some changes in the composition of the Recruitment Committee due to recent field staff reorganization in the management of recruitment and processing of foster parent applications. We are in the midst of making these staff changes and determining Area representation on the committee. Additions to the committee also have included the Foster Parent Ombudsman and the Administrator of the Adoption Opportunities Grant.